

# The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality

*Studies in Anthropological History*

BY *Denise Aigle*



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STUDIES 41

BRILL

## The Mongol Empire between Myth and Reality

# Iran Studies

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Denise Aigle



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## Acknowledgements

The studies in this volume are the result of a decade of research relating to the Mongols. My interest initially spurred with Ilkhanid Iran, and I later broadened the scope of my analysis in an attempt to understand the Mongol Empire as a point of cross-cultural contact. Iran remained the fulcrum, since at this time the Persian Ilkhanate was the centre of a great geopolitical space, linking China, Central Asia, Syria-Palestine and the Latin West.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to those who inspired this research. What I owe to Jean Aubin cannot readily be put into words. He infected me with his curiosity and his constant desire to broaden the field of investigation. Françoise Aubin did me the great favour of drawing my attention to the Mongols of China. Thanks to Roberte Hamayon, I became interested in shamanism. An understanding of this universe, so different from Islam, is essential to make sense of the system of representations of the medieval Mongols. To Michel Tardieu I owe my interest in studying contacts between East and West, in particular through the myth of Prester John. Jean-Claude Garcin's very constructive comments enabled me to sharpen my approach to the Mamluk sources.

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# List of Abbreviations

## Sources

- Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*. Ed. and trans. J.B. Abbeloos and Th. Lamy. Paris-Leuven, 1872–1877, 3 vols.
- Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum* *Chronicon Syriacum*. Ed. P. Bedjan. Paris-Leipzig, 1890.
- Bar Hebraeus/Budge *The Chronography of Gregory Abû'l-Faraj (1225–1286)*. Ed. and trans. E. Wallis Budge. London, 1932, 2 vols.
- Beiträge* *Ta'riḫ salāṭīn al-mamālik* or *Beiträge zur Geschichite der Mamlukensultanat in den Jahren 690–721 der higrā nach arabischen Handschriften*. Ed. K.V. Zetterstéén. Leiden: Brill, 1919.
- al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-islām* *Ta'riḫ al-islām*. Ed. 'Umar Tadmurī. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'arabī, 1421/2000, 11 vols.
- Durar* Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, Aḥmad. *al-Durar al-kāmīna fī a'yān al-mī'a al-thāmania*. Heyderabad, 1929–1930, 4 vols.
- Guillemus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium* *Itinerarium*. In *Sinica Franciscana*. Ed. P. Anastasius Van den Wyngaert. Quarrachi-Firenze, 1929, 164–332.
- Husn* Shāfi' b. 'Alī al-Kātib. *Husn al-manāqib al-sirriyya al-muntaza'a min sīrat al-zāhiriyya*. Ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Khuwayṭir. Riyāḍ, 1976.
- Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il *al-Nahj al-sadīd wa-l-durr al-farīd fī mā ba'd ta'riḫ Ibn al-'Amīd*. Ed. and trans. E. Blochet. Paris: Firmin Didot (Patrologia Orientalis, vols. XII, XIV, XX), 1919–1928.
- [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar* *Ta'riḫ mukhtaṣar al-duwal*. Ed. Anton Ṣalahānī. Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1992<sup>3</sup>.
- Ibn al-Nafīs *Theologus autodidactus of Ibn Nafīs (al-Risāla al-kāmiliyya fī sīrat al-nabawīyya)*. Eds. Max Meyerhof and Joseph Schacht. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.
- Jean de Joinville *Vie de saint Louis*. Ed. Jacques Monfrin. Paris: Garnier, 1995.

- Juwaynī, *Ta'riḫ-i jahāngushā*  
Juwaynī/Boyle 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Aṭā' Malik. *Ta'riḫ-i jahāngushā*. Ed. M. Qazwīnī. Leiden and London, 1912–1937, 3 vols. *The History of the World Conqueror*. Trans. J. Andrew Boyle. Manchester, 1958, 2 vols.
- Kanz* Ibn al-Dawādārī, Abū Bakr. *Kanz al-durar wa jāmi' al-ghurar*. Vol. VIII. Ed. Ulrich Haarmann, Freiburg-Cairo, 1971. Vol. IX. Ed. Hans Robert Roemer. Freiburg-Cairo, 1960.
- Lettres de Jacques de Vitry* *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry (1160/1170–1240), évêque de Saint-Jean d'Acre*. Ed. R.B.C. Huygens. Leiden: Brill, 1960.
- Lupprian *Die Beziehungen der Päpste zu islamischen und mongolischen Herrschen im 13. Jahrhundert*. Rome (Studi et Testi, 291), 1981.
- Majmū' fatāwā* Ibn Taymiyya, Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Majmū' fatāwā Shayḥ al-Islām Aḥmad b. Taymīya*. Vol. XXVIII and XX. Ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsīm al-Najdī al-Ḥanbalī, Riyāḍ, 1978–1995.
- al-Maqrīzī *Kitāb al-Sulūk li-ma'rifat duwal al-mulūk*. Ed. M. 'Abd al-Qādir. Beirut, 1997, 8 vols.
- Marco Polo/Kappler *Le deviselement du monde*. Ed. René Kappler. Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 2004.
- Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora*  
*Niḥāyat* *Chronica majora*. Ed. H.R. Luard. London, 1872–1883, 7 vols.  
al-Nuwayrī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Niḥāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*. Vol. XXVII. Ed. Najīb Muṣṭafā Fawwāz and Ḥakīmat Kasāy Fawwāz. Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'ilmīyya, 2004.
- Nujūm* Ibn Taghrī Birdī, Abū-l-Maḥāsīm. *al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa-l-Qāhira*. Vol. VIII. Le Caire: Wizārat al-thaqāfa wa-l-irshād al-qawmī, s.d
- Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī  
Rashīd al-Dīn/Alizade *Dhayl mir'āt al-zamān*. Cairo, 1992, 4 vols.  
*Jāmi' al-tawāriḫ*. Vol. III. Ed. A.A. Alizade. Baku, 1957.
- Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī *Jāmi' al-tawāriḫ*. Ed. Bahman Karīmī. Tehran, 1959–60.
- Rawḍ* Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, Muḥyī al-Dīn. *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*. Ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz Ḥuwayṭir. Riyāḍ, 1976.

- RCEA *Répertoire chronologique d'épigraphie arabe*. Vol. XII. Ed. E. Combe, J. Sauvaget and G. Wiet. Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 1943.
- Salimbene di Adam, *Cronica* *Cronica*. Ed. G. Scallia. Turnhout: Brepols, 1998–1999, 2 vols.
- Secret History* *The Secret History of the Mongols. A Mongolian Epic Chronicle of the Thirteenth Century*. Trans. Igor de Rachewiltz. Leiden: Brill, 2004, 2 vols.
- Simon of St Quentin *Histoire des Tartares*. Ed. J. Richard. Paris: Geuthner, 1965.
- Şubḥ al-Qalqashandī, Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad. *Şubḥ al-ashā' fī şinā'at al-inshā'*. Ed. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rasūl Ibrāhīm. Cairo: Wizārat al-thaqāfa wa-l-irshād al-qawmī, 1913–19, 14 vols.
- Ta'riḫ-i guzida* Mustawfī Qazwīnī, Ḥamd Allāh. *Ta'riḫ-i guzida*. Ed. Ḥusayn Nawā'ī. Tehran, 1362sh./1983.
- Waṣṣāf *Tajziyat al-amṣār wa-tazjiyat al-a'ṣār*. Ed. Bombay, 1852–1853.
- Ystoria Mongalorum* Johannes de Plano Carpini. *Ystoria Mongalorum*. In *Sinica Franciscana*. Ed. Anastasius Van den Wyngaert. Quarrachi-Firenze, 1929, 27–143.
- al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo *Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān*. Ed. and trans. Li Guo as *Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography: al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'āt al-zamān*. Leiden: Brill, 1998, 2 vols.
- Zubdat* Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār, Rukn al-Dīn. *Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'riḫ al-hijra*. Ed. Donald S. Richards. Beirut, 1998.

### Modern Studies

- AEMA *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi*
- AOASH *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*
- BEO *Bulletin d'Études Orientales*
- BSOAS *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*
- CAJ *Central Asiatic Journal*
- Doerfer *Türkische und mongolische Elemente in Neupersischen*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1963–1975, 4 vols.
- EI<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopaedia of Islam* second edition.

<i>EIr</i>	<i>Encyclopædia Iranica</i>
<i>HJAS</i>	<i>Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies</i>
<i>HSS</i>	<i>Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales</i>
<i>IJMES</i>	<i>International Journal of Middle East Studies</i>
<i>IrSt</i>	<i>Iranian Studies</i>
<i>JA</i>	<i>Journal Asiatique</i>
<i>JAOS</i>	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
<i>JESHO</i>	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
<i>JRAS</i>	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
<i>JSAI</i>	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
<i>MIDEO</i>	<i>Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire</i>
<i>MSR</i>	<i>Mamluk Studies Review</i>
<i>REMMM</i>	<i>Revue des Mondes Musulmans et de la Méditerranée</i>
<i>StIr</i>	<i>Studia Iranica</i>
<i>StIsl</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>

## Notes on Transliteration

For the spelling of Mongol and Turkic proper names, I have followed the system adopted in J.A. Boyle, *The Successors of Genghis Khan* (London & New York, 1971).

The Western personal names have been spelled as in English in the case of names familiar to medievalists (e.g. William of Rubruc for Guillemus de Rubruc) but in the original form for the others (e.g. Salimbene di Adam, Jean de Joinville or Jacques de Vitry).

Arabic names and terminology conform to the standards set in *Mamluk Studies Review*; these have also been applied to Persian.

For the Mongolian terminology, I have used the system found in Igor de Rachewiltz's *Secret History of the Mongols*.

Dynasties are written without diacritical marks.

Dates are recorded in first Islamic Lunar and the Common Era. Dates relating to Europeans (like papal dates) use only the Common Era.

Qur'anic translations are drawn from *The Kuran interpreted* by A.J. Arberry (New York, 1950).



# Introduction

Both modern historiography and the mediaeval chronicles have often portrayed the period of Mongol rule as one of the darkest times for the Iranian lands. It has been seen as a major split in their history. The Mongol conquest brought about an unprecedented situation in Muslim Iran: a society organized on the basis of Islamic precepts and customs was suddenly in the hands of a people whose world-view and mores were utterly different.

The descendants of Genghis Khan used the shared political culture of the nomadic peoples of the steppes to establish their rule over the great stretches of Asia and Eurasia.<sup>1</sup> The *Secret History of the Mongols*, the founding text of Mongol identity, is a source of the utmost importance. It informs us as to the social organization of these tribes, their values, and their religious and cultural universe. We find in it their models of political legitimization at the time of the conquests, in particular the concept of “Heaven” (*tenggeri*). The first paragraph begins:

The origin of Činggis Qan. *At the beginning* there was a blue-grey wolf, born with his destiny *ordained* by the Heaven above. His wife was a fallow doe. They came crossing the Tenggis.<sup>2</sup> After they had settled at the source of the Onan River on *Mount Burqan Qaldun*, *Batačiqan* was born to them.<sup>3</sup>

From his birth and on, thus, Heaven had chosen Genghis Khan for a lofty destiny.<sup>4</sup> The term “Heaven” appears in other expressions too: Genghis Khan

---

1 See Peter Golden, “Imperial Ideology and the Sources of Political Unity Amongst the Pre-Činggisid Nomads of Western Eurasia,” *AEMA* II (1982): 37–76; “War and Warfare in the Pre-Činggisid Western Steppes of Eurasia,” in *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500–1800)*, ed. N. Di Cosmo (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 105–172.

2 Lit. “the Sea” or fig. “a large body of water” such a great lake, possibly the Baikal, see Igor de Rachewiltz, *Secret History* 1:1, n. 1.

3 *Secret History* § 1. Italics are from the translator.

4 The term “Heaven” (*tenggeri*) is often associated with the term “Earth” (*qajar*), as when Genghis Khan, after his victory over Jamuqa, declares: “Heaven and Earth increased my force and took me into their protection,” *Secret History* § 125. About these ideas at the time of Genghis Khan, see Igor de Rachewiltz, “Heaven, Earth and the Mongols in the Time of Činggis Qan and his Immediate Successors (ca. 1160–1260)—A Preliminary Investigation,” in *A Lifelong Dedication to the China Mission. Essays Presented in Honor of Father Jerom*



is the “son of Heaven.”<sup>5</sup> The “force of Heaven” assists him in his conquests. Heaven grants him and his successors his protection, as is attested in the diplomatic documents. But while the khan’s success is explained by the support of the “Heaven Above,” he has not in fact received any order to conquer the world *in the name of the tenggeri*.<sup>6</sup> The *Secret History* mentions Heaven’s mandate to Genghis Khan only once, in words spoken by the shaman Kōkōchū (Teb Tenggeri). The context is to rule over the Mongol *ulus*, i.e. the steppe nomads and not over the whole world.<sup>7</sup> The references to Heaven in the *Secret History* do not show that Genghis Khan’s foundation of the Mongol empire was due to a heavenly decree. Rather, they serve primarily to retrospectively legitimize a human act,<sup>8</sup> but some researchers pointed out a religious inspiration of Mongol expansion.<sup>9</sup>

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Heyndricks, *CICM, on the Occasion of His 75th Birthday and the 25th Anniversary of the F. Verbiest Institute K.U. Leuven*, eds. N. Golvers and S. Lievens (Leuven, 2007), 107–144.

- 5 These expressions evoke the heaven (*tian*) of Chinese representations, in particular the “son of the heaven” (*tian zi*), associated with the emperors of China. Yüan specialists have seen in the *tenggeri* of the Mongols, and also of the ancient Turks, an influence of the Chinese ideas on the representations of the steppes peoples, see particularly Igor de Rachewiltz, “Some Remarks on the Ideological Foundation of Chinggis Khan’s Empire,” *Paper on Far Eastern History* 7 (1973): 21–36; *Secret History* 1:224–227. Chen Sanping has suggested a new hypothesis as to the origins of the concept. He proposes a synthesis of Altaic, Iranian and Chinese influences in the Turkic and Mongol concepts of Heaven, see Chen Sanping, “Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions Among Ancient Asiatic Cultures Regarding Sacral Kingship and Theophoric Names,” *JRAS* 12/3 (2002): 289–325.
- 6 Denis Sinor, “The Acquisition, the Legitimation, the Confirmation and Limitations of Political Power in Medieval Inner Asia,” in *Representing Power In Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission And The Sacred*, eds. I. Charleux, G. Delaplace, R. Hamayon, and S. Pearce (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 2010), 43. On the pre-Mongol roots of this ideology among the peoples of the Eurasian Steppes, see Osman Turan, “The Ideal of World Domination among the Medieval Turks,” *StIsl* 4 (1955): 77–90; Peter Golden, “Imperial Ideology”; “War and Warfare.”
- 7 Peter Jackson, “World-Conquest and Local Accommodation: Threat and Blandishment in Mongol Diplomacy,” in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East. Studies in Honor of John E. Woods*, eds. J. Pfeiffer and Sh. A. Quinn (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 4.
- 8 Marie-Lise Beffa, “Le concept de *tänggäri*, ‘ciel’, dans l’Histoire secrète des Mongols,” *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 24 (1993): 215–236.
- 9 See Anatoly Khazanov, “Muhammad and Jenghiz Khan Compared: The Religious Factor in World Empire Building,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35/3 (1993): 461–479; and a good discussion in Reuven Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement. Studies in the Relations between the Mamluk Sultanate and the Mongols Ilkhanate (1260–1335)* (Turhout: Brepols, 2013), 40–46.

The sudden appearance of the Mongols on the stage of history brought about profound changes across Eurasia. They created the greatest empire in human history because they were able to mobilize the human and material resources of the territories that came under their control. All the subjects of the empire, whether nomadic or settled, city dwellers, craftsmen or farmers, had to assist the Mongols' imperial ambitions. Thomas Allsen rightly observes that Hülegü's siege of Baghdad was not a confrontation between the Mongols and the Abbasid caliphate, but between the human, financial, material and technological resources of Northern China, Central Asia, Russia, the Caucasus and Iran, on the one hand, and those of the caliphate on the other.<sup>10</sup>

The beginning of Mongol rule in Iran was marked with a particularly traumatic invasion. The massive psychological impact of the installation of the Mongols was due to the violence with which it came about. The first invasion, in 1218–22, marked by the general massacre (*qatl-i 'āmm*) of the populations of the great cities of Transoxiana and Khurasan, was particularly devastating because at first the sole purpose of the conquerors was to systematically exploit the populations and territories that they had crushed. The final conquest took place when Möngke decided that the Iranian lands, while remaining under his authority, were to form an *ulus* for his brother Hülegü. He reduced the Ismā'īlī main fortresses in Qūhistān and the southern Caspian in the first months of 1256. The campaign ended with the capture of Alamut on 19 November. Hülegü then returned to Azerbaijan, which became the centre of Mongol rule in Iran. In late 1257 he moved on Baghdad. He had the population massacred and the Abbasid caliph executed. The city fell to the Mongols on 13 February 1258. The title of "*il-khān*" that was granted to Hülegü clearly expresses his inferior rank: it means "khan subordinate to the Great Khan."<sup>11</sup>

Ruptures never take place at the same time as the events that decide of them. It takes at least a generation, often longer, for the changes to take effect. Furthermore, their seeds often precede the events from which they seem to spring and which later come to symbolize them. Such is the case with the apparent decline of Iran: its immediate cause may have been the devastating effects caused by the shock of conquest, but the roots were of longer standing. The region's economic and cultural slump followed long decades of disruption.

In the eleventh century, Iran was invaded by the Saljuq Turks. These Muslims were quickly adopted into its Islamic society, whose social and political

10 Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism: the Policies of the Grand Qan Möngke in China, Russia and the Islamic Lands, 1251–1259* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 7.

11 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Evidence for the Early Use of the Title Ilkhan among the Mongols," *JRAS* 3/1–3 (1991): 353–361.

structures did not undergo any profound transformation. Nevertheless, the consequences of the Turkish conquests were felt in the long term, especially with the growth in nomadism and with destruction in Khurasan, Azerbaijan and Kirmān due to the ravages of the Ghuzz. When the Mongols invaded Iran, the country had been in crisis for almost two centuries. In the cities, conflicts between quarters, often based on religious antagonism, had caused much destruction and hobbled small traders and craftsmen.<sup>12</sup> In Isfahan, there was persistent conflict between Hanafis and Shafi'is.<sup>13</sup> The latter turned the city over to the Mongols in the hope that they would wipe out their rivals.<sup>14</sup> The sectarian struggle between Hanafis and Shafi'is triggered the massacres committed by the invaders.<sup>15</sup> In Baghdad, destruction and pillaging resulting from the clashes that had been taking place between Sunnis and Shi'ites since the Buyid period had already left the city partly ransacked long before it was taken by Hülegü.<sup>16</sup>

In the Ilkhanid period, Iran came under a dual judicial system. Qur'anic law, the Shari'a, was freely applied as the private law of the Muslims, pronounced by the jurists (*faqih*) and applied by judges (*qāḍī*). Mongol law, the *yāsā*, served as public law applicable to all political matters.<sup>17</sup> Judgements were pronounced before a special court, the *yārghū*, by Mongol judges. The contradictions between the law of Genghis Khan and the precepts of the Qur'an were predominantly tangible in relation to taxation and the status of land holdings. The innovations (*bid'a*) which offended Islamic legality were made up for by the advantages enjoyed by the various religious communities under a non-Islamic regime. The pious sought a theological meaning to the Mongolian domination, foremost among those who collaborated with the new regime and accepted its benefits; these including 'ulamā'. 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī, a harsh critic of his age's moral decadence, entered Arghun's court when he was fifteen years old, but against the wishes of his master, he determined to leave

12 Wilferd Madelung, "The Two Factions of Sunnism: Hanafism and Shāfi'ism," in *Religious Trends in the Early Islamic Iran* (Columbia Lectures on Iranian Studies 4, 1988), 26–38; Jean Calmard, "Le chiisme imamite en Iran à l'époque seldjougide, d'après le *Kitāb al-Naqd*," *Le monde iranien et l'islam* 1 (1971): 43–67.

13 Hossein Mirjafari, "The Ḥaydarī-Ni'matī Conflicts in Iran," *IrSt* xii/3–4 (1979): 136.

14 John E. Woods, "A Note on the Mongol Capture of Iṣfahān," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 36/1 (1977): 50.

15 Hossein Mirjafari, "The Ḥaydarī-Ni'matī Conflicts in Iran," 136.

16 George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran. A Persian Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2003), 31–34.

17 See chapter 7.

the *dīwān* and to devote himself to Sufi path.<sup>18</sup> Abaqa's reign was a long period during which Persian culture once again flourished, as is attested by the literary clients of the Juwaynī.<sup>19</sup>

In the history of Iran, the Ilkhanid period probably saw the widest freedom for the country's religious communities at large.<sup>20</sup> According to Peter Jackson, despite the enforcement of certain steppe customs religious groups gained a freedom of action that they had not enjoyed before the advent of the Mongols. In 1230 the Nestorian monk Simeon Rabban Ata was able, with the approval of the Mongol military, to build Christian churches and erect crosses in Muslim Azerbaijan.<sup>21</sup> The presence of churches at the court of the Mongol princes (or princesses) in Iran is mentioned not only from Christians sources. Rashīd al-Dīn relates Doquz Khatun and Hülegü manifested consideration for the Christians, so much so that "they build churches throughout the realm. A church was always built at the gate of Doquz Khatun's *ordu*, and the *nāqūs*<sup>22</sup> was sounded."<sup>23</sup> Hülegü, Abaqa and Arghun were generally favourable to Christianity and, among other privileges, exempted churches and

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18 In his work [*al-Urwa li-ahl al-khalwa wa-l-jalwa*, ed. Najīb Māyil al-Harawī (Tehran, 1362sh./1983), 297–299, 320–324] 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī gives an account of his childhood and royal service at Arghun's court. On 'Alā' al-Dawla al-Simnānī, see Devin DeWeese, "'Alā' al-Dawla Simnānī's Religious Encounters at the Mongol Court Near Tabriz," in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz*, ed. J. Pfeiffer (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 35–76, and George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, 253.

19 See George Lane, *Early Mongol Rule in Thirteenth-Century Iran*, chapter "Poets, Sufis and Qalandars," 226–254.

20 On the religious situation under the Ilkhans, see the overview of Alessandro Bausani, "Religions under the Mongols," in *Cambridge History of Iran* VII:538–549. On the Mongols and Ilkhans' relations with Christians, see Wilhelm Baum, "Die Mongolen und das Christentum," in *Caucasus During the Mongol Period—Der Kaukasus in der Mongolenzeit*, eds. Jürgen Tubach, Sophia G. Vashalomidze and Manfred Zimmer (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2012), 13–46.

21 Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," in *Mongols, Turks, and Others. Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, eds. R. Amitai and M. Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 262.

22 The Persian word *nāqūs* derives from the Syriac *nāqōshā*, see Pier Giorgio Borbone, "The Church at the Court of Arghun in Syriac and Armenian Sources," *Bazmavep* 3–4 (2010): 577, n. 61. *Nāqūs* is the clapper used instead of bells in eastern Christian churches to summon for worship.

23 Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī, 678.

monasteries from taxes.<sup>24</sup> Even Ghazan Khan is not uniformly besmirched in the sources. Stepʿanos Ȫrbēlean never accused the Ilkhan for its deeds directly. When he describes devastations and plunder of churches under Ghazan's rule, he blames Nawrūz.<sup>25</sup>

Mongol rule did not lead to cultural decline—on the contrary. There was intense cultural exchange between Iran and China. Many Chinese elements were integrated into Iranian culture in a range of fields including historiography, cartography, agriculture, medicine, astronomy, and material culture.<sup>26</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn is probably the best example of the trend. His *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*, in which he compiled historical information on the known world, is the first universal history in the true sense. Furthermore, in this unprecedented historiographical enterprise, Rashīd al-Dīn transmitted many Mongol sources in Persian.<sup>27</sup> His geographical compendium, entitled *Šuwar al-aqālīm* (The Configuration of Climes), has not come down to us. But from indirect sources, we know that he had a fair understanding of the basic geography of the Far East, Korea and Japan.<sup>28</sup> One of the most interesting Persian manuals written at the time of Ghazan Khan was connected with the agricultural works carried out at Tabriz. In this, the *Kitāb-i Āthār wa aḥyāʾ*, also compiled by Rashīd al-Dīn, he provides detailed information on the botanical characteristics of many foreign, particularly Chinese, plants.<sup>29</sup> Under the Ilkhans, a paradoxical renewal of the sciences took place. Hülegü selected Marāgha as the site of a major observatory. This establishment served as a training centre for astronomers. Its first director was Našīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. Scientific works in multiple languages were compiled at Marāgha by scientists from many parts of Eurasia. The Ilkhan ordered Našīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī to collaborate with the Chinese

24 Both Abaqa and Arghun struck coins with Christian legends, Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," 273.

25 Zaroui Pogossian, "Armenians, Mongols and the End of Times: An Overview of 13th Century Sources," in *Caucasus During the Mongol Period—Der Kaukasus in der Mongolenzeit*, 190.

26 Thomas T. Allsen, "Notes on Chinese Titles in Mongol Iran," *Mongolian Studies* 14 (1991): 27–39; "Biography of a Cultural Broker. Bolad Ch'eng-Hsiang in China and Iran," in *The Court of the Il-Khans, 1290–1340*, eds. J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 7–22; *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Sheila Blair, "The Religious Art of the Ilkhanids," in *The Legacy of Genghis Khan. Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353*, eds. Linda Komaroff and Stefano Carboni (New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2002), 104–133.

27 Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 83–102.

28 Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 104.

29 Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 119.

astronomers he had brought from the East.<sup>30</sup> In the field of medicine, Hülegü had a contingent of Chinese doctors attached to his court.<sup>31</sup> The court of the Ilkhans at Tabriz, where many Western merchants, especially Italians, stayed, became a crossroads not only of international commerce,<sup>32</sup> but also of cultural exchange. There was an active trade in commodities such as carpets and gold cloth.<sup>33</sup> Also in Tabriz, Rab'-i Rashīdī's scriptorium was Iran's most important centre for the production of illustrated manuscripts.<sup>34</sup>

It is true during the first decades of their rule over Iran, the Mongols brought about a break in the country's history. Their invasion led to a long-term shift in the demographic and political balance in favour of the nomadic world which would last until the Pahlavi period. Many Turkic populations were pushed westwards, either fleeing the Mongols or fighting in their armies. The process of Turkification of Iranian Central Asia, which had begun much earlier, was completed. The same can be said for Azerbaijan. In addition to the destruction and the inflow of tribes, the Mongols also brought new political practices. The Persian elites were made to collaborate with their new masters who, while

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30 Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 162–163.

31 Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire. A Cultural History of Islamic Textiles* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 9.

32 Nicola Di Cosmo, "Mongols and Merchants on the Black Sea Frontier in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries: Convergences and Conflits," in *Mongols, Turks and Others. Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, 391–424; "Black Sea Emporia and the Mongol Empire: A Reassessment of the Pax Mongolica," *JESHO* 53 (2010): 83–108; Virgil Ciociltan, *The Mongols and the Black Sea Trade in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Sheila Blair, "Tabriz: International Entrepôt under the Mongols," in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz*, 321–356; Johannes Preiser-Kapeller, "Civitas Thauris. The Significance of Tabriz in the Spatial Frameworks of Christian Merchants and Ecclesiastics in the 13th and 14th Centuries," in *ibid.*, 251–299; Patrick Wing, "Rich in Goods and Abounding in Wealths: The Ilkhanid and Post-Ilkhanid Ruling Elite and the Politics of Commercial Life in Tabriz, 1250–1400," in *ibid.*, 301–321; see also Luciano Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'Empire mongol," *JA* (1962): 549–574.

33 Thomas T. Allsen, *Commodity and Exchange in the Mongol Empire*.

34 See Sheila Blair, "Writing and Illustrating History: Rashid al-Dīn's *Jami' al-tavarikh*," in *Theoretical Approches to the Transmission and Edition of Oriental Manuscripts*, eds. J. Pfeiffer and M. Kropp (Beirut: Orient Institut der Deutschen-Mörganländischen Gesellschaft, 2007), 57–66. But it was Ilkhanid scriptoria also in Rashīd al-Dīn's pious foundations established at Sultāniyya, Ḥamadān and Yazd, see Sheila Blair, "Calligraphers, Illuminators, and Painters in the Ilkhanid Scriptorium," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, ed. L. Komaroff (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 167–182, 171. On the "Arts of the Book" in Ilkhanid Iran, see *ibid.*, 167–286.

tolerant in matters of religion, introduced alien customs into Persian culture—especially in the administration.

The Ilkhanid state in Iran had a dual administration: a Mongol one with a Mongol staff and an Iranian one with an Iranian staff. The period was characterized at all levels, from the staff of the *dīwān* down to junior local officials, by harshness of social relations. Jean Aubin has shown that the Persians were the most exposed to sudden reversals of fortune which could culminate in bloodbaths.<sup>35</sup> Throughout the existence of the Persian Ilkhanate, policy was decided not just at the court of the Ilkhan (the *urdu*) but also at those of the emirs (*noyad*). The latter surrounded the ruler, and sometimes created him. They dominated him or plotted against him, and intervened incessantly in matters of state. The careers of great men were made at the *urdu*. It was also where local notables came to seek the grant of administrative functions in their areas. The rivalries among these men for the management of a mere *bulūk* explains the numerous intrigues that were hatched at the Ilkhan's court and which, throughout the period, had devastating effects in all regions.<sup>36</sup>

After the shock of the conquest, the Mongols implemented the so-called *pax mongolica*, which facilitated trans-Asiatic cultural transmission and trade.<sup>37</sup> The destructive impact of the first phase of the conquest on the economy of the captured territories cannot be denied. But the various regions that came under the "Tatar yoke" do not seem to have been ruined. On the contrary, studies show that the economy recovered rapidly. The key factor in this revival was long-distance trade.<sup>38</sup> Historians have noted the close association between the nomads of the Eurasian steppe and the merchants of the sedentary world. The former were obliged to acquire such goods as winter fodder, textiles, luxuries,

35 See Jean Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persans dans les remous de l'acculturation* (Leuven: Peeters, 1995).

36 See Denise Aigle, *Le Fārs sous la domination mongole (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XIV<sup>e</sup> s.)*. *Politique et fiscalité* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005).

37 Thomas T. Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters: The Appropriation of Culture and the Apportionment of Peoples in the Mongol Empire," *Journal of Early Modern History* 1/1 (1997): 2–23; *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*; "The Circulation of Military Technology in the Mongolian Empire," in *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500–1800)*, ed. Nicola Di Cosmo (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 265–293; Michal Biran, "The Mongol Transformation: from the Steppe to Eurasian Empire," *Medieval Encounters* 10/1–3 (2004): 339–361.

38 On the Mongols' success in controlling economic zones, see J.W. Dardess, "From Mongol Empire to Yüan Dynasty: Changing Forms of Imperial Rule in Mongolia and Central Asia," *Monumenta Serica* 30 (1972–1973): 122–129.

and manufactured wares available only in the sedentary world.<sup>39</sup> The expansion of a nomadic empire might be described as the extension of nomadic political control over a long-distance trade network.<sup>40</sup> The interest of Genghis Khan's line in commerce is well known. The term *ortoy*, of Turkic origin, means "partner."<sup>41</sup> According to Thomas Allsen, this term passed into Mongolian and was used in the thirteenth-and fourteenth-century sources "to denote a merchant operating with a capital supplied by a Činggisid prince."<sup>42</sup> From the time of Genghis Khan's first conquests, the Mongols made a point of asking the rulers with whom they were in contact to grant free passage and protection to merchants. They created new commercial infrastructure, developing the caravan routes linking the Pacific to the eastern Mediterranean.<sup>43</sup> The entire territory of the empire thus benefited from the Mongols' trade policy.<sup>44</sup> In China, Muslim and Chinese merchants as well as religious institutions also gained from the new situation created by the Yüan.<sup>45</sup> In Armenia and Georgia, which were subdued by the Ilkhans, the beneficiaries of their trade policy were parvenu merchant families.<sup>46</sup> The courts of the Mongol Khans came to serve as centres of redistribution for the luxury products brought from eastern regions. Ibn Baṭṭūṭa writes that in the capital of the Golden Horde the traders lived in a walled quarter to protect their goods.<sup>47</sup>

Alongside the development of trading activity, two other characteristic traits marked the Mongol empire. After the conquests, the Great Khans ruled a considerable number of different peoples and ethnicities. In this period, international diplomatic exchanges all across Eurasia and the Far East soared to an unprecedented level. The Mongol empire was therefore characterized by multilingualism. Few states at that time could equal its capacity to translate

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39 Thomas T. Allsen, "Mongolian Princes and their Merchant Partners, 1200–1260," *Asia Major* 11/2 (1989): 83; see also Elizabeth Endicott-West, "Merchant Associations in Yüan China: The Ortog," *Asia Major* 11/2 (1989): 127–154.

40 Thomas T. Allsen, "Mongolian Princes," 84.

41 See an excellent survey of this term in the Ilkhanids sources in Doerfer 11:25–27.

42 Thomas T. Allsen, "Mongolian Princes," 85.

43 Thomas T. Allsen, "Ever Closer Encounters," 20–23.

44 Charles J. Halperin, "Russia in the Mongol Empire in Comparative Perspective," *HJAS* 43/1 (1983): 239–261.

45 Franz H. Schurmann, *Economic Structure of the Yüan Dynasty* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956).

46 L.S. Khachikyan, "Mongols in Transcaucasia," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* (1958): 104.

47 Janet Martin, "The Land of Darkness and the Golden Horde," 414.



documents.<sup>48</sup> In Qaraqorum there were scribes who knew Persian, Uyghur, Chinese, Tibetan and Tangut.<sup>49</sup> They were employed in the central chancellery, which was a centre of intense linguistic contact. One of the first results of that linguistic situation was that a number of words came to circulate throughout Eurasia. The term *alafa*, which appears in the Persian sources when emissaries arrived in a region to collect taxes, means “wage” or “provision of food.” It became a widespread technical term in the fourteenth century, entering Mongolian, Turkic and Russian.<sup>50</sup> It is interesting, however, to note that it first appears in a Latin text in the form *alafa* in a letter written in 1326 by a Christian missionary stationed in Ch’üan-chou, a city on the southern coast of China.<sup>51</sup>

The prestige language was Mongolian, written in the Uyghur alphabet, but Persian and Chinese remained useful in administration.<sup>52</sup> In Iran, knowledge of the Uyghur language and script was deemed the highest form of learning.<sup>53</sup> This language was learnt by such figures as Sa’d al-Dawla, Şadr al-Dīn al-Zanjānī and Rashīd al-Dīn. They were able to converse directly with the Ilkhans.<sup>54</sup> Mongolian, written vertically, inspired the Persian poets as a metaphor for tresses of hair.<sup>55</sup> The need to translate Mongolian documents into Persian explains why a Mongolian chancellery was established in Cairo to deal with correspondence with the Ilkhans and the khans of the Golden Horde.<sup>56</sup> There were officials in charge of correspondence in Mongolian. One

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- 48 On the linguistic situation in Eurasia in the Mongol period, see the important observations of Thomas T. Allsen, “The Rasūlid Hexaglot in its Eurasian Cultural Context,” in *The King’s Dictionary. The Rasūlid Hexaglot: Fourteenth Century Vocabularies in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Greek, Armenian and Mongol*. Translated by Tibor Halasi-Kun, Peter B. Golden, Louis Ligeti and Edmund Schütz, with introductions by Peter B. Golden and Thomas T. Allsen (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 25–49.
- 49 Juwaynī/Boyle 11:607. This information was confirmed by William of Rubruck who stayed in the capital some years later (1253–1254).
- 50 Francis W. Cleaves, “Alaba = ‘(A)l(a)f(a)h,” *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 35 (1963): 181–187.
- 51 Letter in Christopher Dawson, *The Mongol Mission. Narratives and Letters of the Franciscan Missionaries in Mongolia and China in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 1955), 235–236.
- 52 A.P. Martinez, “Changes in Chancellery Languages and Languages Changes in General in the Middle East, with Particular Reference to Iran in the Arab and Mongol Periods,” *AEMA* VII (1987–91): 109.
- 53 Juwaynī/Boyle 1:7–8; 11:523.
- 54 A.P. Martinez, “Changes in Chancellery,” 109.
- 55 See Vladimir Minorsky, “Pür-i Bahā’s ‘Mongol’ Ode,” *BSOAS* 18/2 (1956): 261–278. See also Igor de Rachewiltz, “The Mongolian Poem of Muḥammad al-Samarqandī,” *CAJ* 12/4 (1969): 280–285.
- 56 Bertold Spuler, *Die Mongolen in Iran, Politik, Verwaltung und Kultur in Ilchanzeit, 1220–1350* (Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1955), 377.

of them, Aytamish al-Muḥammadi,<sup>57</sup> was sent on embassy to Abū Saʿīd thrice, because he had not only mastered the oral and written language but was also knowledgeable about Mongol customs.<sup>58</sup> The impact of Mongolian and Turkic on Persian has been exhaustively documented by Doerfer,<sup>59</sup> while the socio-linguistic aspects of this issue, namely the roles of Mongolized Persians and Persianized Mongols, have been studied by Martinez.<sup>60</sup>

The need to communicate with Mongol rulers, and to engage in missionary and trading activities, aroused an interest in learning languages in Europe.<sup>61</sup> In the Muslim East, multilingual glossaries and dictionaries were drawn up for merchants. The most renowned for the number of languages it contains is the *Rasūlid Hexaglot*, composed in the fourteenth century by a Yemeni ruler of literary bent. It is an Arabic lexicon with Arabic transcriptions of Persian, Turkish, Mongolian, Greek and Armenian words. Although the Ilkhans were no longer an active political force at the time the *Rasūlid Hexaglot* was composed, it may be said that the Mongols of Iran were probably one of the sources (if not the sole source) for the Mongolian vocabulary found in the text.<sup>62</sup>

Early works on the Mongol empire concentrated on political history, emphasizing the barbarity of the conquerors and the destruction that they wreaked. In recent decades, historical works on the various khanates, in particular the Ilkhans, have been published. Researchers have also sought to shed light on the Mongols' interest in learning, technology and major international commerce, as well as their great ability to implement an effective administrative system using the ways of the practices of the sedentary peoples they had conquered.<sup>63</sup> I here present the Mongol empire, taking the Persian Ilkhanate as my principal point of reference, as a moment of contact between political ideologies, religions, cultures and languages, and, in terms of reciprocal representations, between the Far East, the Muslim East, and the Latin West.

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57 On this figure of Mongolian origin, see Donald P. Little, "Notes on Aitamiš, a Mongol Mamluk," in *Die islamische Welt zwischen Mittelalter und Neuzeit: Festschrift für Hans Robert Roemer zum 65. Geburtstag*, eds. U. Haarmann and P. Bachman (Beirut, 1979), 390–396.

58 Ibn Faḍl Allāh al-ʿUmarī, *A Critical Edition and Study on Ibn Faḍl Allāh's Manual of Secretarship "al-Taʿrīf fi al-muštalaḥ al-šarīf"*, ed. Samir al-Durūbī, 2 vols. (Al-Karak, 1992) 1:63.

59 Doerfer, *Türkische und mongolische Elemente*.

60 A.P. Martinez, "Changes in Chancellery Languages," 130–137.

61 Jean Richard, "L'enseignement des langues orientales en Occident au Moyen Age," *Revue des études islamiques* 44 (1976): 149–164.

62 Peter Golden, "The World of the Rasūlid Hexaglot," in *The King's Dictionary*, 3.

63 See the bibliographical reference by David Morgan, "The Mongol Empire in World History," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 425–437.

In Part 1, “The *memoria* of the Mongols in historical and literary sources,” I examine how the Mongol rulers were perceived by the peoples with whom they were in contact. Chapter 1 aims at a broad comparative perspective of the use of memory to reinterpret the feats of great historic figures. To put it another way, it studies how the past serves the present through historiography and literary sources in East and West. The development of the figure of Prester John in the Mongol period is the subject of Chapter 2. This famous Western legend played a part in integrating the Mongols into the mediaeval eschatological dream. Armenians used this famous legend about Prester John as an ally of the Mongols to promote the project of the common Latin-Mongol crusade. The following two chapters are devoted to the historiography. Barhebraeus, head of the Jacobite church in the lands of the East, spent twenty-two years moving between Iraq and Azerbaijan, spending much time at Marāgha where he was able to access the Ilkhans’ library to compose his Syriac chronicle. His account reflects the point of view of a Christian prelate who was in contact with the Mongol authorities. To some extent the chronicle makes up for the almost entire lack of indigenous sources. It is more objective concerning the Mongols’ culture and way of life than most of the Islamic sources. From the thirteenth century on, the Persian historical sources are enhanced by the appearance of new genres. The Ilkhans commissioned verse chronicles on the model of the *Shāh-nāma*. The purpose was to integrate the Mongols into the history of Iran through the literary model of the Persian epic tradition. In this same period, there appears a very particular type of historiography in which facts are presented in a visual form, the *taqwīm*, combining genealogies with textual narrative. The authors of these texts hoped to impose a certain social representation of the various clans of Turkic-Mongol lineage on future generations. Here we once more see the role of *memoria* as an instrument of historiographical propaganda.

Part 2, “Shamanism and Islam,” is devoted to the perception of shamanism by Muslim authors. Chapter 5 describes that we can know of the representational system of the medieval Mongols and the shamans’ practices. Islamic heresiography does not take shamanism into consideration. In other words, shamanism was not seen as a religion. The Muslims thought of it more as a medical and divinatory discipline than as a system of religious representations. Nevertheless, some shamanistic practices bear similarities to Sufi rites, as may be seen in Central Asia to day. The way in which Muslim historians attempted to integrate the would-be successors of Genghis Khan into an Islamic framework is considered in the chapter 6, using the case of Timur. In chapter 7, I explain why Mongol law, the *jasaq*, was considered by the Muslims to be at

odds with Shari‘a. Until recently, researchers adopted this view. They relied largely on a late Mamluk source, resulting in considerable mythicization. But on the basis of a comparison of a large number of textual attestations of various origins, including the *Secret History*, we can question much of what has been written on the Mongol *jasaq*.

Parts 3, “Conquering the world protected by the Tenggeri,” and IV, “Mamluks and Ilkhans: The quest for legitimacy,” deal with geopolitical questions involving the Ilkhans and the Latin West. Genghis Khan’s successors, as we have noted above, claimed the protection of “Eternal Heaven” (*möngke tenggeri*) to justify their conquests. This protection of the *tenggeri* is cited in all the Ilkhanid diplomatic correspondence, albeit only implicitly by Ghazan Khan and Öljeitü, who had converted to Islam. The failure of the attempted alliance between the Ilkhans and the papacy can be partly explained by a clash between two ideologies. The protection granted by Heaven to the khans of Genghis’ line renders all resistance futile and prone to harsh punishment. The papacy, with its universal vision of Christendom, laid down as a precondition to any alliance that the khans should convert to Christianity. It therefore ran into another universal vision on the Mongol side.

The question of the relations between the Ilkhans and the Mamluks is taken up in the last four chapters. Baybars, the true founder of the Mamluk sultanate, suffered a twofold handicap. Domestically, he had committed a double regicide with his role in the killing of Tūrān Shāh—the son and successor of his master al-Şāliḥ Ayyūb—and, after the victory of ‘Ayn Jālūt, of the Mamluk sultan Quṭuz. Faced with the imperial dynasty of the Mongols of Iran, the former slave Baybars could not lay claim to any lineage. He instead based his legitimacy on Islam, re-establishing in Cairo the Abbasid caliphate that Hülegü had destroyed. He led campaigns against the Armenians—who had formed an alliance with the Ilkhans—the Franks, and the Shi‘ites communities of Syria-Palestine. Through these feats Baybars forged for himself the image of a *ghāzī* sultan who intended to make himself the guarantor of Islam. For his part, Ghazan Khan, after converting to Islam, continued the expansionist policy of the Ilkhans, attacking the region three times. His own attempt to portray himself as head of the *umma* can be seen in several documents issued during his occupation of Damascus in 1300–1, as well as in the diplomatic correspondence. The presence of Christians in his army drew criticism from Mamluk religious authorities, especially the Hanbali scholar Ibn Taymiyya who composed several anti-Mongol *fatwās* casting doubt on the sincerity of Ghazan Khan’s conversion and denouncing the Islam of the Mongols.



**PART 1**

*The Memoria of the Mongols in  
Historical and Literary Sources*





# Mythico-Legendary Figures and History between East and West

## Myths and Legends vs History?

Historians, heirs to a long tradition of distrusting myth, have often reduced it to a product of the imagination devoid of historical value.<sup>1</sup> As early as the fourth century BC, Thucydides excluded myth from historical knowledge “because the *mythôdes*<sup>2</sup> combines rumours, muddled stories, ready-made ideas, unchecked facts, and the fantastic borne by credulity.”<sup>3</sup> Written history, anxious to establish factual precision by comparing alternative accounts and critically analysing sources, thus distinguished itself from mythical and legendary narrative. The division between historiography and myth, however, no longer seems as clear-cut as it did a few decades ago, as shown by the works of numerous historians. Santo Mazzarino, for example, in his study *Il Pensiero Storico classico* searches for historical mentality in the religious elements and in the myths. He builds up a new conception of history.<sup>4</sup>

Arnaldo Momigliano writes about this book:

The historian, for Mazzarino, is not essentially a professional researcher into the truth of the past, but rather a diviner, a prophetic interpreter of the past [...]. Every poetic or mythical evocation [...] of the past is a matter of historiography.<sup>5</sup>

1 The consideration of myth is based on works dealing with Greek mythology, the structural analyses of Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Georges Dumézil's exploration of the symbolic systems of the Indo-European peoples. In his inaugural lecture at Collège de France, Lévi-Strauss briefly praises history but from the point of view of anthropology. This view of history has been analyzed and questioned by Marc Gaborieau, “Anthropologie structurale et histoire,” *Esprit* 332 (1963): 579–595.

2 *Muthôdes*, an adjective derived *muthos*, refers to that which is legendary. On the usage of this word, see Luc Brisson, *Platon, les mots et les mythes. Comment et pourquoi Platon nomma le mythe* (Paris: La Découverte, 1982).

3 Marcel Detienne, “Mythologies,” in *Dictionnaire des sciences historiques*, ed. A. Burgière (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1986), 484–486.

4 Santo Mazzarino, *Il Pensiero Storico classico*, 3 vols. (Bari: Laterza, 1966).

5 Review by Arnaldo Momigliano, *Rivista Storica italiana* 79 (1967): 206–219.



Nevertheless, giving myth its righteous place in historiography implies defining it, bearing in mind that the meaning of *mythos* in ancient Greece evolved with the changing vocabularies around “saying” and “speech,” in a historical process that shows in the works of Plato. For the Greek philosopher, the term referred to: “That discourse which serves to communicate everything a given group has remembered of its past and transmits orally from one generation to the next.”<sup>6</sup>

This acknowledgement of the place of myth in historiographical production is no obstacle to historical investigation. Myth, after all, “was formed somewhere, in some particular historical period.”<sup>7</sup> Tales of high deeds, credited to the mythical ancestors sung of in epic traditions, are indeed “the historian’s prey.”<sup>8</sup> These accounts embroider events and founding fathers. In this respect:

The myth in new historical perspective is an object of history, but it also stretches out historical time towards its origins, enriches the historian’s methods and fuels a new level of history, slow history.<sup>9</sup>

We must remember that in the processes that are used to reinterpret the deeds of historical figures, memory (*memoria*) plays a fundamental role. Storytellers as well as chroniclers select from the available *memorabilia* what they find to be *memoranda*, the events judged worthy of being remembered. The study of historiography implies looking into the “content of memory.” The study of historical memory is “a study of propaganda, of the decisions about what should be remembered and how it should be remembered.”<sup>10</sup> According to Patrick Geary: “*Memoria* was a key organizing principle [...] in every aspect of medieval life. It meant Memory, but also those objects and actions by which memory was preserved.”<sup>11</sup>

Another factor must also be born in mind, though: it is certainly possible to bring something back to memory, but it is also possible to forget things. The

6 Luc Brisson, *Platon, les mots et les mythes*, 12.

7 Daniel Fabre, “Mythes,” in *La nouvelle Histoire*, eds. J. Le Goff, R. Chartier and J. Revel (Paris, 1978), 430.

8 The expression is borrowed from Jacques Le Goff, *Histoire et mémoire* (Paris: Gallimard, 1988), 230.

9 Jacques Le Goff, *Histoire et mémoire*, 230.

10 Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 9.

11 Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, 10. On *memoria* on early Islam, see Antoine Borrut, *Entre mémoire et pouvoir. L’espace syrien sous les derniers Omeyyades et les premiers Abbassides* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

right to enunciate tradition bestows a crucial power. Whoever can order the past can also govern the future. The past is preserved where it can be made compatible with the present. The process is therefore one of composition and reinterpretation. Jan Assmann explains that:

Memories can be false, distorted, invented, or even artificially implanted [...]. The truth of a memory lies not so much in its faithfulness to the facts as in its current value. Events remain alive in memory [...] or sink into oblivion.<sup>12</sup>

The transformation of the past into a “founding story”<sup>13</sup> signifies that memory is an anthropological act. If we want to understand these distant centuries, we must seek the social and mental structures that have acted as filters, eliminating or transforming the past in line with the needs of the time.

The *memoria* of the great men of medieval Islam is no exception to this rule. It also is the result of a wish to provide future generations with a picture that would give these figures a privileged status. Jacqueline Chabbi notes that:

For long time the mission of history was to relate a truth held to require belief and to place it in a chronology. This mission was one of memorialization: to tell the important facts, oftentimes of heroic nature, that the prince wished to be remembered about him. This history tended to glorify a king, a dynasty, a people [...]. Glory only lasts if it is immortalized.<sup>14</sup>

In the collective memory, great historical figures are thus bound to become mythical characters richly endowed with virtues, the scions of legendary lineages destined for a glorious posterity. They embody, and sometimes alter, the heroic ideal and the history of the ancestors of whom they are proclaimed heirs. In this respect the medieval Muslim world inherited a broad combination of Greek, Persian and biblical traditions. Alexander, Ardashīr, Khusraw Anūshīrwān, and the Solomon of the Qurʾān are its greatest figures. All appear

<sup>12</sup> Jan Assmann, *Moïse l'égyptien* (Paris: Flammarion, 2001), 29–30.

<sup>13</sup> Jan Assmann, *La mémoire culturelle. Écriture, souvenir et imaginaire politique dans les civilisations antiques* (Paris, 2010), 70. See also Marc Bloch's reflections on “the idol of origins” and the relationship between past and present, in *Apologie pour l'histoire*, ed. E. Bloch (Paris: Armand Colin, 1993), chapter “L'histoire, les hommes et le temps,” 80–98.

<sup>14</sup> Jacqueline Chabbi, “La représentation du passé aux premiers âges de l'historiographie califale. Problèmes de lecture et de méthode,” in *Itinéraires d'Orient. Hommages à Claude Cahen*, eds. R. Curiel and R. Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette, 1994), 21.

as modals in the “Mirror for Princes” literature which grew in the Muslim world from the ninth century on. The ideal sovereign of the Mirrors is not only the defender of the Islamic faith. He is inspired, on the one hand, by the “wise king” of the Bible whom Western models, from the Merovingian period, identify with David and Solomon via frequent recourse in political writing to Biblical quotations<sup>15</sup> and, on the other hand, by ancient Persia whose royal figure par excellence is Ardashīr, distinguished by his noble lineage, exemplary behaviour and wish to further the learning of his time.<sup>16</sup>

The historiographical process that creates a hero often consists of reading contemporary events in a retrospective light. The historical figure that is subsequently transformed into a heroic one is usually “foreshadowed by predecessors whose memory he appears to revive.”<sup>17</sup> The life of a great ancestor, reinterpreted, can serve to spread new values, bringing the past into line with the needs of a present which is no longer that of its origins, while the appearance of a new hero can revive an ancient model. Exemplary figures are constructed politically and culturally, in other words socially.<sup>18</sup>

### The Past in Service of the Present: The Historic and Literary Creativity

The writing of history in Iran is greatly influenced by models elaborated in Sasanian period: books of wisdom, Mirrors for Princes, advise literature (*andarz* or *pand*),<sup>19</sup> books of heroic acts (*kār-nāmag*), and royal chronicles. A *Kh<sup>w</sup>adāy-nāmag*, a chronicle of pre-Islamic Persian kings, princes, and warriors, was compiled under the last Sasanian monarch, Yazdgird III (d. 651). The text is lost,<sup>20</sup> but the Arab-Persian works derived from this *Book of Kings* show

15 *Histoire de la pensée politique médiévale*, under the direction of James Anderson Burns (Paris: PUF, 1988), 130–131; Marc Reydellet, *La royauté dans la littérature latine de Sidoine Apollinaire à Isidore de Séville* (Rome, 1981).

16 On Ardashīr, see Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Moralia. Les notions morales dans la littérature persane du 3<sup>e</sup>/19<sup>e</sup> au 7<sup>e</sup>/13<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris: Éditions Recherches sur les civilisations, 1986), 84–100.

17 “Introduction,” in *La fabrique des héros*, eds. P. Centlivres, D. Fabre and F. Zonabend (Paris: Maison des sciences de l’homme, 1998), 6.

18 See Antoine Borrut on “Umayyad heroes,” *Entre mémoire et pouvoir*, 229–320.

19 On this literary genre, see Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Moralia*, 19–112.

20 Ibn al-Muqaffa’ is thought to have produced an Arabic adaptation of this text, see J. Derek Latham, “Ebn al-Moqaffa’,” *Elr* VI:11:40; and F. Gabrieli, “Ibn al-Muqāffā’,” *El<sup>2</sup>* 111:908.

that it was heavily influenced by oral historiography.<sup>21</sup> It is a mixture of legends, myths, and facts. Iran was represented as the center of the world. Rhetorical style and didactic form enhanced the nationalistic spirit.<sup>22</sup> In this period, the concept of history was based on moral foundations. The historiographer was “a promoter of the social, political, and moral values cherished by the Sasanian elite.”<sup>23</sup> During the three first centuries of Islam, the Muslim historiographers had transmitted the Sasanian traditions in Arabic. They provided rich materials to the future Persian historiography.

### *Redeeming Iran's Ancient Past: Firdawsī's National Epic*

From the tenth century on, the authority of the caliph diminished, and autonomous rulers came to prominence in Iran. The court of the Samanids (875–1005) at Bukhara became a centre of Iranian culture. It was at this moment that *darī* developed as a court language heir to Middle Persian. *Darī*, which used the Arabic alphabet, became the literary language alongside Arabic, which the Samanids continued to use as the language for learning and administration.<sup>24</sup> Iran's glorious past was celebrated. A *Book of Kings* by al-Mas'ūdī, which has not survived but is attested by al-Ma'qdisī and al-Tha'ālibī, appears to have been the first *Shāh-nāma* in Persian verse (ca. 940).<sup>25</sup>

In 346/957 Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Ṭūsī, who was not a Samanid ruler but a member of Khurasanian nobility, commissioned his vizir Abū Manṣūr al-Ma'marī to supervise the compilation of a prose *Shāh-nāma*, of which only the preface has survived.<sup>26</sup> Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad's motive was in part pragmatic: to legitimate his position as lord of Ṭūs. The preface contains a lengthy genealogy. It traces Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad's ascent from

21 A. Sh. Shahbazi, “Historiography II. Pre-Islamic Period,” *Elr* x11:328.

22 Ehsan Yarshater, “Iranian National History,” *Cambridge History of Iran* 111:393–401.

23 Ehsan Yarshater, “Iranian National History,” 366.

24 On the first Persian texts, see Gilbert Lazard, *La langue des plus anciens monuments de la prose persane* (Paris, 1963); “Les origines de la poésie persane,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 56 (1971): 305–17; Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *La description de la nature dans la poésie lyrique persane du XI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1969); Richard N. Frye, “Development of Persian Literature under the Samanids and Qarakhanids,” in *Yādnāme-ye Jan Rypka* (Prague, 1967), 62.

25 On Iranian epic genre, see Eve Feuillebois-Pierunek, “L'épopée iranienne: le Livre des Rois de Ferdowsi,” in *Épopées du monde. Pour un panorama (presque) général*, ed. E. Feuillebois-Pierunek (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2011), 143–179.

26 On the political context of this period and the position of Abū Manṣūr, see Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography. To the End of Twelfth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 20–23.

a commander under the Sasanian ruler Khusraw II, Kanārang. The latter was rewarded for his services with the gift of the city of Tūs.<sup>27</sup> Al-Ma‘arrī’s prose work was followed by others, in both prose and verse, most of which were composed during the reign of the Samanid Nūḥ II b. Maṣṣūr (r. 365–87/976–97). It was probably shortly after that Firdawsī began his own *Shāh-nāma*. It was completed in 400/1010.<sup>28</sup> By analysing the so-called “Older preface” to *Shāh-nāma* dated to the middle of the fourteenth century, Olga Davidson reaches the conclusion that the earlier “prose *Shāh-nāma*” was not Firdawsī’s sole source. He had access to “non-textual sources, most notably by contemporary oral accounts” of the *Book of the Kings* traditions.<sup>29</sup> When Firdawsī conceived the idea of writing a new cultural text for the Iranian Muslim community, he had to go back to Iran’s pre-Islamic past, and to uncover a set of national deeds and making up a “value system” that would account for essential elements of the present.

Firdawsī’s *Shāh-nāma* marks the culmination of the tradition it represents. The audience of this text was probably that of the Iranian *dihqān* who are known to have spent “the winter nights listening to recitation of the Iranian historical-epical traditions.”<sup>30</sup> The heroes of ancient Persia were thus perceived as the symbols of the lasting nature of national identity. Recitation of the *Shāh-nāma* was ritualized: in Maḥmūd of Ghazna’s time, the position of reader of the Qur’ān (*qur’ān-kh’wān*) was complemented by one of reader of the *Book of the Kings* (*shāh-nāma-kh’wān*).<sup>31</sup> The declamation of the *Book of Kings* at the court of the Ghaznavid sultan embodied the fusion of the past and present, celebrating the lofty deeds accomplished by the great figures who had marked the glory of ancient Iran.<sup>32</sup>

By invoking pre-Islamic heroic imagery, the *Shāh-nāma* crystallized the collective identity of the Iranians.<sup>33</sup> The cyclical vision of events provided a way of

27 Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 20–21.

28 Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 37.

29 Olga Davidson, “The Testing of the *Shāhnāma* in the ‘Life of Ferdowsī’ Narratives,” in *The Rhetoric of Biography. Narrating Lives in Persianate Societies*, ed. L. Marlow (Boston: Ilex Foundation, 2011), 15.

30 Julie Scott Meisami, *Persian Historiography*, 44.

31 Assadollah-Souren Mēlikian-Chirvani, “Le livre des Rois, Miroir du destin,” *StIr* 1/1 (1988): 33–34.

32 This practice was attested under the Sasanians. They boasted a brilliant poetical tradition, the work of poet-musicians who sang in the royal and noble courts, see Gilbert Lazard, “Les origines de la poésie persane,” 305–306.

33 On the influence and cultural implications of the *Shāh-nāma*, see Assadollah-Souren Melikian-Chirvani, “Conscience du passé et résistance culturelle dans l’Iran mongol,” in *L’Iran face à la domination mongole*, ed. D. Aigle (Tehran: Institut français de recherche

interpreting the various phases of an eventful history.<sup>34</sup> The *Book of Kings* is the mirror in which Iranian society looked upon itself throughout the centuries.<sup>35</sup> That was why, to understand the events, so tragic for Islam, of the Mongol conquest, al-Juwaynī used Firdawsī's epic. The purpose of the citations which stud his *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā*, and which underline its analogies between present and past, is to make Genghis Khan a new Afrāsiyāb, thereby integrating the Great Khan into the history of Iran.<sup>36</sup> According to Gian Biaggo Conte the concept of "epic continuity" is a code that:

allows a community to consolidate its historical experience, conferring sense on them, until they become an exemplary system that is recognized as the community's new cultural text or scripture [...], is the medium through which society takes possession of its own past and gives that past the matrix value of a model.<sup>37</sup>

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- en Iran, 1997), 135–177; "Le Livre des Rois, Miroir du destin," *StIr* 17 (1998): 7–46; Julie Scott Meisami, "The Past in Service of the Present: Two Views of History in Medieval Persia," *Poetics Today* 14/2 (1993): 247–275; "The Šāh-nāme as Mirror for Prince. A Study in Reception," in *Pand-o Sokhan*, eds. Ch. Balaý, Cl. Kappler and Ž. Vesel (Tehran: Institut français de recherche en Iran, 1995), 265–273.
- 34 The *Shāh-nāma* and the era of the Iranian dynasties who claimed independence from the Abbasid caliphate revived nostalgia for ancient Iran. This was the idea of the "Iranian Intermezzo," see Vladimir Minorsky, "Iran: Opposition, Martyrdom, and Revolt," in *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization*, ed. G.E. von Grunebaum (Chicago, 1955), 187. Later, with the massive arrival of Turkic-Mongolian elements [see Hans R. Roemer, "Das turkmenische Intermezzo," *Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran* IX (1976): 263–297] the question of "nostalgia of national identity" arose, see the reflexions of Michele Bernardini, "Patrie Turco-Persiane nell'Islam Classico," in *Patrie, territory mentali*, ed. M. Lumachi (Napoli: Università di Napoli, 2009), 27–54.
- 35 On the role of the *Shāh-nāma* in princely patronage in the Ilkhan period, see Abolala Soudavar, "The Saga of Abu-Sa'id Bahādor Khān. The Abu-Sa'idnāmé," in *The Court of the Ilkhans, 1290–1340*, eds. J. Raby and T. Fitzherbert (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 95–210; Elaine Wright, "Patronage of the Arts of the Book under the Injuids of Shiraz," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 248–268. On the role of image of kingship in Ilkhanid Iran, see Charles Melville, "The Royal Image in Mongol Iran," in *Every Inch a King. Comparative Studies on Kings and Kingship in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, eds. L. Mitchell and Ch. Melville (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 343–369.
- 36 Assadollah-Souren Melikian-Chirvani, "Conscience du passé et résistance culturelle dans l'Iran mongol," 145. It should be remembered that the choice and place of these citations were al-Juwaynī's initiative, and not that of his Mongol masters, Reuven Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement*, 105.
- 37 Gian Biaggo Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Politic Memory in Virgil and Others Latin Poets* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), 142.

### *Poetry as a Vehicle of Legitimacy*

In her research on panegyric Arabic literature, Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevycha emphasizes that the elaboration of the “vision of legitimizing the past”<sup>38</sup> that Tarif Khalidi had pointed to as the domain of jurists was also “eminently that of the poets.”<sup>39</sup> The Umayyad era (41–132/661–750) was the decisive cultural moment when panegyric poetry was established as the expression of allegiance to power and its legitimacy. The tradition of the *jāhili* panegyric ode became a model to be followed by the authors of the Arabo-Islamic *qaṣīda*. Tradition is a witness to “history” in general and a guarantor of the “new history” that the poet is making.<sup>40</sup> The panegyric literature allows contemporary events to be interpreted and absorbed into a broader myth of cultural identity. Its primary function was commemorative, and in political negotiation, it was seen as a *lingua franca*.<sup>41</sup>

In Iran, the panegyric *qaṣīda* was influenced by Arabic models that were adapted to the courtier image of the Iranian rulers. Although the *qaṣīda*'s emergence dates from the time of the Samanid rulers, the most significant development of the panegyric genre dates from eleventh century at the court of Maḥmud of Ghazna.<sup>42</sup> His reign saw the culmination of attempts to versify the ancient Iranian epic tradition in Firdawsī's *Shāh-nāma*, and Persian poetry became a model for glorifying a new ruler or dynasty. The *mathnawī* form was increasingly highlighted over the *qaṣīda* which until then had been the primary form for panegyric poetry, often containing much historical information.<sup>43</sup> According to Julie Scott Meisami, the popularity of a long historical narrative, impossible in any other form, and the prestige of Firdawsī's epic work promoted the adoption of the *mathnawī* form by poets at the expenses of the *qaṣīda*.<sup>44</sup>

38 Tarif Khalidi, *Arabic Historical Thought in the Classical Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29.

39 Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy. Myth, Gender, and Ceremony in the Classical Arabic Ode* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 81.

40 Gian Biaggio Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation*, 42.

41 Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Poetics of Islamic Legitimacy*, 80–81.

42 Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 40–41.

43 See a discussion on this topic by Michal Glünz, “The Persian Qasida in Post-Mongol Iran,” in *Qasida Poetry in Islamic Asia and Africa*, eds. S. Sperl and Ch. Shackleton, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 11:191–195.

44 Julie Scott Meisami, *Medieval Persian Court Poetry*, 80–82; Sunil Sharma, “Amir Khusraw and the Genre of Historical Narrative Verse,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 22/1–2 (2002): 112.

The *Shāh-nāma* gave rise to a fully-fledged epic tradition (*ḥamāsa-sarāʾī*).<sup>45</sup> Amīr Khusraw Dihlawī (d. 1325) uses recent historical events and his own contemporaries, instead of stories and legendary characters from the past, as subjects of epic and romantic *mathnawī*.<sup>46</sup> He is the author of an important work of verse dynastic history which deals with the power struggles and conquests of the Khaljī sultans.<sup>47</sup> It inserts a new chapter of history into the framework of the *Book of Kings* and thereby continues Firdawsī's work, "incorporating the holder of power into this framework" in a sub-genre called *ḥamāsa-yi tārikhī*.<sup>48</sup>

### *The Ilkhans and the Historicized Shāh-nāma*

The historians, too, used this literary epic genre. The historicized *Shāh-nāma* and the versified *Ẓafar-nāma* genre appeared in the Ilkhanid period.<sup>49</sup> This genre continued to grow in Iran during the following centuries, up to the Qajar period. It spread to the Ottoman world and the Indian subcontinent.<sup>50</sup> In time, it was no longer enough to commission a copy of the *Shāh-nāma* in order to back up political ambitions: rulers also wanted their own epic. The continuity

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- 45 On this literary genre, see Šafā, *Ḥamāsa-sarāʾī dar Īrān. Az qadīmtarīn 'ahd-i tārikhī tā qarn-i chahārdum hijrī* (Tehran, 1333sh./1954); "Ḥamāsahā-yi tārikhī va dinī dar 'ahd-i šafāvī," *Iran-Nameh* 1/1 (1982): 5–21.
- 46 Sunil Sharma, "Amir Khusraw and the Genre of Historical Narratives Verse," 112. See also Stephen F. Dale, "Indo-Persian Historiography," in *Persian Historiography*, ed. Ch. Melville (London & New York: Tauris, 2012), 574–576.
- 47 Sunil Sharma, "Amir Khusraw and the Genre of Historical Narratives in Verse," 113–116.
- 48 Michele Bernardini, *Mémoire et propagande à l'époque timouride* (Paris, 2008), 128; Šafā, *Ḥamāsa-sarāʾī dar Īrān*, 343–376.
- 49 See Bert G. Fragner's remarks on the *Shāh-nāma* as a factor in integration of the Mongols into Iranian culture through the practice of "*Shāh-nāma-navīsī*" in "*Die 'Persophonie': Regionalität, Identität und Sprachkontakt in der Geschichte Asiens*" (Berlin, 1999), 59–61.
- 50 Michele Bernardini, *Mémoire et propagande*, 127–146; "Il *Timūr-nāme* di Hātefi et lo *Šāhnāme-ye Esmāʾil* di Qāsemī (Il Ms Frazer 87 della Bodleian Library di Oxford)," in *La civiltà timuride come fenomeno internazionale*, ed. M. Bernardini, special issue of *Oriente moderno* (1996): 97–119. On the Ilkhanid *Shāh-nāma*, see Charles Melville's works cited *infra*. Christine Woodhead, "Reading Ottoman *Ṣehnames*: Official Historiography in the Late Sixteenth Century," *StIsI* 104/105 (2007): 67–80; "An Experiment in Official Historiography: the Post of *ṣehnameci* in the Ottoman Empire, c. 1555–1605," *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 73 (1983): 157–182; Istvan Nyitrai, "Rendering History Topical: One Aspect of a 16th Century Persian Historical Epic in the Ottoman Empire," *AOASH* 48/1 (1995): 108–116; Sara Nur Yıldız, "Ottoman Historical Writing in Persian 1400–1600 (Versified Persian Historical Writing)," in *Persian Historiography*, 450–480.



of this epic literary genre allowed an “ideology of empire to be transmitted.”<sup>51</sup> Despite their undeniable historical interest, these verse chronicles have, with a few exceptions,<sup>52</sup> long been ignored. Scholars of literature have seen little or no literary interest in them, while historians have deemed them unreliable.<sup>53</sup> Now many researchers are using these texts on an equal footing with other sources:

Thus, as with any piece of historical writing, a *Şehname* can be evaluated as historical source on two levels: first, for its contribution to the store of basic factual knowledge of a period, and secondly, for the light it sheds intentionally or otherwise, on contemporary thought and politics.<sup>54</sup>

The majority of the historical *Shāh-nāmas* were composed in the Ilkhanid period. Several texts of this type were composed in Mongol-ruled Anatolia for Saljuq rulers, such as the *Shāh-nāma* of Aḥmad al-Qānī‘ī and Khwāja al-Dihhānī. These works, however, have not survived.<sup>55</sup> Under the Ilkhans, it seems that the first work of this type was the *Shāh-nāma-yi Chingīzī* of Shams al-Dīn al-Kashānī, which was commissioned by Ghazan Khan. The author relies on the historical facts of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, while drawing his stylistic inspiration from Firdawsī.<sup>56</sup> He began his work during the reign of Ghazan Khan but finished under his successor Öljeitü. The *Zafar-nāma* composed by Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī (d. 750/1349–50) comprises 75,000 distiches.<sup>57</sup> It was completed in 735/1335, at the end of the reign of Abū

51 On the politization of epic poetry, see David Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

52 Manūchir Murtaẓavī, “Muqallidīn-i shāh-nāma dar dawri-yi mughūl va tārikh-i manẓūm-i Sham al-Dīn Kashānī,” *Nashriy-i Danishkāda-yi Adabiyāt-i Tabriz* 14/2 (1342sh./1955): 153–162; *Masāyil-i ‘aṣr-i Īlkhānān* (Tehran, 1370sh./1991<sup>2</sup>).

53 As early as 1963, Karl Jahn drew researchers’ attention to these texts, see “Study on Supplementary Persian Sources for the Mongol History of Iran,” in *Proceeding of the Fifth Meeting of the Permanent International Altaic Conference*, ed. D. Sinor, Uralic and Altaic Series 23 (1963): 197–204.

54 Christine Woodhead, “An Experiment in Official Historiography,” 174.

55 Charles Melville, “Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn: Persian Verse Chronicles of the Mongol Period,” *StIsI* 104–105 (2007): 46.

56 Charles Melville, “Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn,” 46. On manuscript tradition, see *ibid.*, 48–50.

57 Charles Melville, “Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī’s *Zafarnāmah* and the Historiography of the Late Ilkhanid Period,” in *Iran and Iranian Studies: Essays in Honor of Iraj Afshar*, ed. K. Eslami

Saʿīd.<sup>58</sup> It provides original information about the reign of the latter. Here too, the author's main source is *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*, but the model for *Zafar-nāma* is clearly Firdawsī's epic. The earliest manuscripts include the text of the *Book of Kings* in the margin, showing the close relationship between the two works.<sup>59</sup>

Equally famous is Aḥmad al-Tabrīzī's *Shāhānshāh-nāma*. The work, commissioned by Abū Saʿīd, was completed in 758/1337, probably at the court of the Jalayirids. It is a history of Genghis Khan and his successors. This *Shāhānshāh-nāma* provides much detail on the end of the Mongol Ilkhanate.<sup>60</sup> As with 'Atā' Malik al-Juwaynī's use of certain passages from the *Shāh-nāma* of Firdawsī, it aims at incorporating the Mongols into the history of Iran. The *Ghāzān-nāma*, composed after the fall of the Ilkhans by Nūr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Azhdārī between 758/1357 and 763/1362, is explicitly intended as a continuation of Firdawsī's *Shāh-nāma*.<sup>61</sup> It is dedicated to the Jalayirid sultan Shaykh Uways (r. 757–6/1356–74). Nūr al-Dīn al-Azhdārī writes that "*daulat-i Ghāzān Khānī*" ended with the end of this Jalayirid sultan's reign. The author's intention is to present Ghazan Khan as the model for Shaykh Uways to follow, and to mark the continuity between the two reigns. The *Ghāzān-nāma* gives a more legendary vision of the Mongols of Iran, and is one of the works that set out to show that "the 'barbarian' Mongols could be included in the Persian-Islamic cultural scheme."<sup>62</sup> The only manuscript to have come down to us was copied in 873/1469 for the Aq Qoyunlu ruler Uzun Ḥasan (r. 857–82/1453–78).<sup>63</sup> The Jalayirids, like the Aq Qoyunlu, had retained practices from the Perso-Mongol tradition. Muḥammad b. Hindūshāh al-Nakhjawānī, in the introduction of his *Dastūr al-kātib*, dedicated to Shaykh Uways, wrote that the Jalayirid Sultan was

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(Princeton, 1998), 1–12. Now the text is edited, see Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, *Zafar-nāma*, eds. N. Rastgār and N. Pūrjavādī (Tehran: Markaz-i Nashr-i Dānishgāh-i Irān, 1999).

- 58 The work is composed of three parts: Arabs' history, Iranian history, and the Mongols.
- 59 Charles Melville, "Between Firdausī and Rashīd al-Dīn," 53. The *Shāh-nāma* is also copied in borders of the *Abū Saʿīd-nāmah*, see Abolala Soudavar, "The Saga of Abu-Saʿīd Bahādor Khān. The Abu-Saʿīdnāmē," in *The Court of the Ilkhans, 1290–1340*, 95–208.
- 60 Charles Melville, "Historiography IV. Mongol Period," *Elr* XII:350.
- 61 Charles Melville, "History and Myth: the Persianisation of Ghazan Khan," in *Irano-Turkic Cultural Contacts in the nth–17th Centuries*, ed. E.M. Jeremiàs (Piliscsaba: The Avicenna Institute of Middle Eastern Studies [2002] 2003), 142; "Gāzān-nāma," *Elr* x:383. The *Ghāzān-nāma* is preserved in an only manuscript at the Library University of Cambridge. Now the text is edited, see Nūr al-Dīn Azhdārī, *Ghāzān-nāma*, ed. M. Dadbbirī (Tehran: Bunyād-i Maḥmūd Afshār, 1381sh./2002).
- 62 Charles Melville, "History and Myth: the Persianisation of Ghazan Khan," 134.
- 63 Charles Melville, "History and Myth: the Persianisation of Ghazan Khan," 134, n. 5.

the “restorer of the traditions of the Changiz-khanid state.”<sup>64</sup> Uzun Ḥasan drew up his *firmāns* in two alphabets, Arabic and Uyghur.<sup>65</sup> These dynasties were the best placed to maintain the long coexistence, dating back to the tenth century, of Turkic-Mongol and Perso-Islamic traditions.

### *The Incorporation of Īrān into Tūrān*

The Qarakhanids, who converted to Islam in the tenth century, remained strongly attached to their origins from the steppe. They developed a Turkic-Persian Islamic culture in which the Turkic element naturally had a place. A Turkic literature emerged: in Kashghar Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib completed in 462/1069–70 a long didactic poem in the tradition of the Persian Mirrors for the Princes, *Kutadgu Bilig*.<sup>66</sup> Clearly influenced by Firdawsī, the author adopts throughout the text the metre (*mutaqārib*) and epic style of the *Shāh-nāma*. Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib seeks to show that the Turkic traditions of good fortune and divine favour (*qut*) are comparable to Persian royal glory (*farr-i izādī*).<sup>67</sup> In *Kutadgu Bilig*, the Turanian champion of the Persian national epic, Afrāsiyāb, is identified with the Turkic national hero Alp Er Tonga.<sup>68</sup>

Some years later, Maḥmūd al-Kashgharī, in his compendium of the Turkic language (*Dīwān lughat al-Turk*) drawn up from 462/1072, also evokes Afrāsiyāb, saying that the original name of the Great Khan of the Turks Afrāsiyāb was Alp Er Tonga.<sup>69</sup> The Turks, like the Persians, adapted the Arabic metre to their language. But beneath this new metre lie the syllabic verses of popular poetry, which had kept the memory of Alp Er Tonga very much alive.<sup>70</sup> The mythic standing of Alp Er Tonga impelled Turkic men of letters, readers of the *Shāh-*

64 John E. Woods, *Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire. Revisited and Expanded* (Salt Lake City: The University of Utah Press, 1999), 4–5.

65 On this question, see Abolala Soudavar, “The Mongol Legacy of Persian *Farmāns*,” in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 407–421.

66 Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig). A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*. Translated, with an Introduction and Notes by R. Dankoff (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago, 1983).

67 The Turkic rulers employed their own concept of *qut*, which corresponded to the Mongolian *su*, see *Secret History* 1:355; Dorfer 1:342–343. See also Anne F. Broadbrige, *Kindship and Ideology in the Islamic and Mongol Worlds* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 9–10. On good fortune in Muslim Central Asia, see Robert Dankoff, “Inner Asia Wisdom Traditions in the Pre-Mongol Period,” *JAOS* 101 (1981): 87–95.

68 Louis Bazin, “Qui était Alp Er Tonga, identifié par les Turcs à Afrāsiyāb,” in *Pand-o Sokhan*, 37–42.

69 L. Bazin, “Qui était Alp Er Tonga, identifié par les Turcs à Afrāsiyāb,” 37.

70 L. Bazin, “Qui était Alp Er Tonga, identifié par les Turcs à Afrāsiyāb,” 38–39.

*nāma*, to identify him with Afrāsiyāb, the hero of a *Tūrān* which had by then become assimilated with Central Asia. The Iranian national epic includes a number of accounts of wars between *Īrān* and *Tūrān*, a term which, in this context, refers to the traditional abode of the enemies of ancient Persia. The Qarakhanids, by naming themselves Āl-i Afrāsiyāb, clearly expressed their Turkic identity, but defined it in the terms of Iranian culture.

The ancient Persian tradition, as transmitted to Islamic Iran by Firdawsī, was known to the Arab historians. Timur had an interview with Ibn Khaldūn in Damascus in 803/1401 after his conquest of the city. The Timurid asked the historian to tell him something about himself that might please him. Ibn Khaldūn replied that the Turks had held Khurasan in the time of Afrāsiyāb: “evidence of their origin from royalty.”<sup>71</sup> Persian epic is perceived by Ibn Khaldūn as a literary instrument for creating an “additional” genealogy of Timur that may “compensate the real one.”<sup>72</sup> In this period *Shāh-nāma*’s genealogy was regarded as a myth, more than historical evidence.<sup>73</sup>

### *Perceptions of History and Fictional Literature*

At the time of the crusades and the Ilkhanid incursions into Bilād al-Shām, literary creativity also appeared in the form of popular literature. As with the historical sources, this literary production allows us to understand the process by which, on the basis of relatively well-known elements, a series of “reworking” and continuations leads to the creation of *chansons de geste* or epic texts (*sīra*), such as *Sīrat Baybars*.<sup>74</sup> The first manuscripts of this text which have come down to us date from the Ottoman period. It should already be Baybars’ lives, but a *Sīrat Baybars* appears at fifteenth century for political motives. The Circassians Mamluks, lacking legitimacy, nominated Baybars as the first of them.<sup>75</sup> But references to the *sīra* literature appear in the twelfth century, at the

71 Walter J. Fischel, *Ibn Khaldūn and Tamerlane. Their Historical Meeting in Damascus, 1401 A.D. (803 A.H.): A Study Based on Arabic Manuscripts of Ibn Khaldūn “Autobiography”, with a Translation into English and a Commentary* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1952), 36.

72 Michele Bernardini, “The *Shāh-nāma* and Timurid Historiography,” in *Shahnama Studies III. The Reception of Firdausi’s Shahnama*, vol. 2, eds. G. van den Berg and Ch. Melville (Leiden: Brill), forthcoming.

73 Michele Bernardini, “The *Shāh-nāma* and Timurid Historiography,” in *Shahnama Studies III*.

74 It should be recalled that the term *geste* (Latin plural *gesta*), “lofty deeds,” refers to heroic exploits, the deeds that memory should preserve.

75 On usage of *Sīrat Baybars*, see Jean-Claude Garcin, “De l’utilité changeante du *Roman de Baybars*,” in *Lectures du Roman de Baybars*, ed. J.-Cl. Garcin (Marseille: Ed. Parenthèses,

point when “the Muslims reacted to the attempts of the Franks.”<sup>76</sup> Jean-Claude Garcin underlines that the *sīra* “are a form of committed *jihād* literature aimed at the aggression against the Muslim Mediterranean world.”<sup>77</sup> The development of this type of literature also corresponds to an internal development in the Muslim world. This was a time when a phenomenon of “popularization” of the learned culture took place, “in response to a widened public’s need to feed its imagination, or to conceive the world through this imagination.”<sup>78</sup>

The “authors” of the *sīra* were not all mere storytellers. No doubt they were “successive authors adding their touch to the previous form of the work, or modifying its meaning.”<sup>79</sup> But every storyteller has meet his public’s expectations, which can only be grasped by studying “the mental space of the text.”<sup>80</sup> Jean-Claude Garcin very appropriately speaks of “target groups,” or in other words audience groups whose interests were known to the storytellers.<sup>81</sup>

This fictional literature can open up a world of representations which is richer than that of the historical sources. In the Damascene version of *Sīrat Baybars*, there is an original cycle in which the sultan’s body is afflicted by an illness. Where the royal historiography constructs the “glorious body” of the ruler, this cycle presents the “pathetic body”<sup>82</sup> of Baybars. The body of the king, like that of the hero, is a “vehicle of symbols, allegories, metaphors and metonymies.”<sup>83</sup> In the fictional framework of the *Sīra*, appear the external enemies (Franks and Mongols) that confront the population of Bilād al-Shām, but also the internal dangers to the Sunni integrity of the community, the Ismā’īlī (*fidāwī*), a group of very colourful figures determined to maintain their inde-

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2003), 115–142; Nasr al-Dīn Naamoune, “La ‘modernisation’ de la vie de Baybars au xv<sup>e</sup> siècle,” in *ibid.*, 143–158.

76 Jean-Claude Garcin, “*Sīra/s* et Histoire,” *Arabica* 51/1–2 (2004): 34. See also Jean-Claude Garcin, *Sīra/s* et Histoire (suite), *Arabica* 51/3 (2004): 223–257.

77 Jean-Claude Garcin, “*Sīra/s* et Histoire,” 35.

78 Jean-Claude Garcin, “Récit d’une recherche sur les débuts du Roman de Baybars,” in *L’Orient au cœur, en l’honneur d’André Miquel*, ed. Floréal Sanagustin (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2001), 251.

79 Jean-Claude Garcin, “*Sīra/s* et Histoire (suite),” 228.

80 Jean-Claude Garcin, “*Sīra/s* et Histoire,” 36.

81 Jean-Claude Garcin, “*Sīra/s* et Histoire (suite),” 245.

82 The expression is borrowed from Louis Marin, *Politiques de la représentation*, eds. A. Cantillon, G. Careri, J.-P. Cavaillé, P.-A. Fabre and F. Marin (Paris: Aubier, 2005), 105.

83 Katia Zakharia, “Les sept plaies du Sultan Baybars. Le corps du sultan, espace de résurgence des maux de la communauté,” in *Le Bilād al-Šām face aux mondes extérieurs. La perception de l’Autre et la représentation du souverain*, ed. D. Aigle (Beirut: Presses de l’Ifpo, 2012), 137.

pendence from central rule.<sup>84</sup> In this cycle of the *Sīra*, the sultan's body has become an echo of the threats that the Muslim community must face. These ills are incarnated in seven boils that appear on Baybars' chest. They have the peculiar characteristic that they cannot be healed by medicine. Only Baybars himself, by eliminating their cause, can make them disappear.

With time, historical figures tend to be transformed into legendary characters. Accounts of leaders, for example, are constructed in relation to the historical reality of the moment in which they are consigned to writing. This historiographical and literary creativity is widely put to use to justify political claims or enoble origins. Thus Saladin, Baybars and Genghis Khan have given rise to countless legendary tales which became props of belief in both East and West. They became real heroes, in accordance with Daniel Fabre's definition: "[heroes] are exceptional beings in their courage, sense of honour, beauty of body and word, and intellectual agility."<sup>85</sup>

## Baybars and Genghis Khan between Legend and History

### *The Model of the Ghāzī Sultan*

Baybars indisputably represents the heroic memory of Islam. During his life, his secretaries, especially Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (620–92/1223–93) and Ibn Shaddād (613–84/1217–85), wrote enlightening biographies on the model of those written for Saladin.<sup>86</sup> Even before the historical literature perpetuated the memory of Baybars' lofty deeds in a romance, *Sīrat Baybars*, the sultan's royal biographies already presented him as a hero. Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, his secretary and official biographer, compares his feats with those of the heroes who conquered Syria in the early centuries of Islam. The past becomes a principle for explaining the present.<sup>87</sup>

Several forms of otherness are to be found in *Sīrat Baybars* and can be explained by the way the text came into being over a long historical period.

84 On Ismā'īlī in *Sīra*, see Jean-Patrick Guillaume, "Les Ismaéliens dans le *Roman de Baybars*: genèse d'un type de littérature," *StIsI* 84 (1996): 145–179.

85 Daniel Fabre, "L'atelier des héros," in *La fabrique des héros*, eds. P. Centlivres, D. Fabre and F. Zonabend (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 1999), 235.

86 Muḥyī al-Dīn b. 'Abd al-Zāhir, *al-Rawḍ al-zāhir fī sīrat al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Khuwayṭir (al-Riyāḍ, 1976); 'Izz al-Dīn Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Ibrāhīm b. Shaddād, *Ta'rikh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. A. Ḥuṭayṭ (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983).

87 Denise Aigle, "Les inscriptions de Baybars dans le Bilād al-Šām. Une expression de la légitimité du pouvoir," *StIsI* 96 (2003 [2006]): 87–115.

The Mongols are never referred to by the term “Tatars,” which is usually used in the historical sources, but by names referring to Persia. The first term, “Persians” (*a’jām*), emphasizes ethnic otherness, while “fire-worshippers,” i.e. Zoroastrians (*‘ābid al-nār*) and “Shi’ites” (*afṛād*) are markers of religious otherness. *Sīrat Baybars* combines the three categories in one: “*ahl al-‘inād*,” that is, those who obstinately reject the truth of Sunni Islam.<sup>88</sup> *Sīrat Baybars* took shape at the end of the fourteenth century, but it largely “crystallized” during the Ottoman era.<sup>89</sup> The Mongol invasions are used by the authors of the *Sīra* as a kind of paradigm to express the Sunni hostility to Shi’ite Persia. As a consequence, it was a “propaganda instrument” under the Ottomans. *Sīrat Baybars*, the recitation of which was “ritualized,” is a form of transmission through memory and commemoration of the “non-contemporary.” The memory of Baybars’ high deeds against the enemies of Islam is transformed into an act of resistance against the “Other.” *Sīrat Baybars* bears similarities to the epic genre, a literary form which, as we have seen, is traditionally the instrument for a norm which “is imposed at the level of both the individual and the community to defend and perpetuate them.”<sup>90</sup> The oral recitation of *Sīrat Baybars* enabled the values of Muslim society to be transmitted through the centuries, while being adapted to the public’s expectations. In June 1994 for example, a Damascus storyteller adapted *Sīrat Baybars* for an audience of Lebanese tourists. He had the Franks disembark in Beirut and occupy Lebanon. Baybars, having set out from Damascus, came down from Mount Lebanon and finally drove the invaders out to the applause of the Lebanese tourists.<sup>91</sup>

The figure of Baybars, unlike that of Saladin,<sup>92</sup> did not inspire much literary creativity in the West. His name was nevertheless handed down to posterity in many Latin and Middle French sources such as the various treatises on recov-

88 Thomas Herzog, “La mémoire des invasions mongoles dans la *Sīrat Baybars*. Persistances et transformations dans l’imaginaire populaire arabe,” in *Le Bilād al-Šām face aux mondes extérieurs*, 352–353.

89 The first indirect literary reference to *Sīrat Baybars* is a note by Ibn Iyās in the early sixteenth century, see Rudi Paret, “*Sīrat Baybars*,” *EI<sup>2</sup>* 1:1160–1161.

90 Roberte Hamayon, “Chamanisme, bouddhisme, héroïsme épique: quel support d’identité pour les Bouriates post-soviétiques?” *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 27 (1996): 327–355.

91 Thomas Herzog, “La mémoire des invasions mongoles dans la *Sīrat Baybars*,” 360, n. 92.

92 On Saladin’s chivalry in western sources, see Margaret Jubb, *The Legend of Saladin in Western Literature and Historiography* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2000), 170–194; Jean Richard, “Les transformations de l’image de Saladin dans les sources occidentales,” in *Figures mythiques des mondes musulmans*, ed. D. Aigle, *REMMM* 89–90 (2000): 177–187, and Anne-Marie Eddé, *Saladin* (Paris: Flammarion, 2008), 543–544.

ering the Holy Land.<sup>93</sup> These often deal with Baybars, whose name appears in several forms. A former slave, the Islamic sources endowed him with a fictional genealogy featuring the name of the merchant who bought him, in the form al-Bunduqdārī, which the Latin texts translate as *Benductor*, *Bunducdar*, *Bothendar*, etc. His title, al-Malik al-Zāhir, is rendered *Malec el Vaher*.<sup>94</sup> In these treatises, Baybars' acts make him a ruthless foe of the Eastern Christians as well as the Franks. Fidence of Padua, the author of *Liber recuperationis Terre Sante*, writes:

Benducdar, when he reigned over Egypt and Damascus, became angered against the Christians. He inflicted many ills upon them [...], and captured and put to death thousands of Christians.<sup>95</sup>

The authors of the treatises emphasize the often brutal acts that Baybars committed against the Christian populations. The Mamluk sultan was not acclaimed like Saladin in the second crusade cycle. The Western sources never endow him with ruthless knightly cardinal virtues. These treatises are intended to convince the West of the merits of the new military expeditions to the Holy Land. Most of these texts see an alliance with the Mongols the *sine qua non* for recovering the holy sites. But these treatises also played their part in constructing the *memoria* of the crusades in the West. Abbès Zouache writes that the authors participated in a “celebratory memory” of the crusade which was already, at that time, countered by a “hostile memory” that emphasized its failures.<sup>96</sup> The treatises bear witness to the dream of a conquest that could not be realized, but that the West could not give up.

As Muslim rulers faced with the enemies of Islam, the historiographical career of Baybars follows the model of the Prophet Muḥammad who embodied the prototypical holy warrior. Genghis Khan, for his part, represents the pagan ruler, founder of a vast empire, whose successors reigned over much of the Eastern Muslim world. The biography of Genghis Khan in the Islamic sources gave rise to numerous reinterpretations in accordance with the needs

93 *Projets de Croisade* (v. 1290–v. 1330), ed. J. Paviot (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2008).

94 *Projets de Croisade*, 81, 87, 139, 172, 174, 186, 238.

95 *Projets de Croisade*, 87. This text was probably composed between 25 March 1290 and 4 January 1291, see Jacques Paviot, “Introduction,” 16.

96 Abbès Zouache, “Croisade, mémoire, guerre: perspectives de recherche,” *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 168 (2010): 526.



of the time.<sup>97</sup> To get around the difficulty of using the pagan figure of Genghis Khan, the historiographers gradually came to “monotheize” his image, while his heritage became a means of legitimization.

*The Invention of a Biblical Genealogy for Islam’s ‘Accursed’ Foe*

In the sources contemporary with his conquests, Genghis Khan is an implacable foe of Islam, often described as “the accursed.” Nevertheless, the symbolic impact of the taking of Baghdad by Hülegü, followed by the execution of the caliph, had an even greater moral impact than the massacres of the inhabitants of the great cities of Khurasan at the time of the Great Khan’s invasion of the eastern Iran. But it was also necessary to find a theological explanation for the massacres they committed against Muslim populations. The Persian historian al-Juwaynī, who was in the service of the Ilkhans, presented their advance across the Muslim empire as the fulfilment of God’s will. He compares it to the punishments inflicted on the peoples who had disobeyed God and cites the Qur’ānic verse: “He is able to send forth upon you chastisement, from above you or from under your feet.”<sup>98</sup> Al-Juwaynī can readily identify the Mongols with those who must annihilate the Muslims. Their divine mission becomes quite manifest since they have succeeded in wiping out the Ismā’īlī, seen as heretics, something no Muslim power had previously been able to do. He compares the Mongol destruction of the Ismā’īlī fortress of Alamut to the slaughter of the Jews by the Prophet during the battle of Khaybar: “The truth of God’s secret intent by the rise of Genghis Khan has become clear” (*ḥaqīqat-i sirr-i ilāhī dar khūruj-i chingīz khān rūshan shud*).<sup>99</sup>

In post-islamization sources there is a tendency to “monotheisize” Genghis Khan’s figure, although without ignoring his indigenous shamanic background.<sup>100</sup> The *Secret History* says that the forebears of the Mongols were a blue wolf and a fallow doe. But Rashīd al-Dīn gives the Mongols a biblical ancestry originating in Japhet, son of Noah.<sup>101</sup> In Muslim tradition, Japhet is the father of the Turks, whom Rashīd al-Dīn understood as closely related to the Mongols. In connection with the biblical ancestry, he adduced another tradition. He reports a legend, summarized as follows:

97 In the West, the figure of Genghis Khan underwent several reinterpretations, notably through another legend, that of Prester John, see chapter 2.

98 Qur’ān 6:65.

99 Juwaynī, *Ta’rīkh-i jahāngushā* 111:138; Juwaynī/Boyle 11:638.

100 Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 114. On this legend see chapter 6.

101 Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī, 113.

About two thousand years ago, the Mongol tribes and the Turkic tribes fought one another; the Mongols were defeated, and so annihilated that there remained of them only two men, Nukūz et Qiyān, and two women; they fled to a mountain called Ergene Qun; their descendants having multiplied, the territory became too small. A man, an expert in metallurgy, melted the iron ore he found in the mountain to open a road. Up to this day, the Mongols celebrate the anniversary of their exodus in a ceremony during which their leader, with the blacksmith's tongs, bears melting iron onto the anvil and strikes it.<sup>102</sup>

In the ancestral legends of the Turks found in the Chinese sources, distinction should be made between two types of caverns. According to Denis Sinor, the Ergene Qun cavern is an open-air amphitheatre of mountains, a large and enclosed valley.<sup>103</sup> The Ergene Qun theme perhaps reflected a Mongolian tradition but is not mentioned in the *Secret History*. It bears a striking resemblance to the origin myths of Turks. Garbled versions are to be found in al-Jūzjānī, Ricoldo da Monte di Croce and Het'um. Al-Jūzjānī ascribed the breaking of the wall to Genghis himself.<sup>104</sup> All the ancestral legends are explicit in their linking of metallurgy with the caverns. Genghis Khan's given name was Temūjin. This name corresponds with Turkic-Mongol Temürchi(n) "blacksmith."<sup>105</sup> This tradition probably facilitated this connection.

In the fourteenth century, the Persian historian Mustawfī al-Qazwīnī, in the chapter of his *Ta'riḫ-i guzida* dedicated to the Mongols, gives a variant of the legend reported by Rashīd al-Dīn. He writes that the Mongols are descendants of Japhet, the son of Noah (*aṣl-i یشān az nasl-i Yāfith b. Nūḥ ast*). But he Islamizes Genghis Khan to some extent, making him a descendant of Oghuz Khan who belonged to a Muslim tribe (*ān qaḥm-i ū rā muslim shud*).<sup>106</sup> He recounts the Mongol forefathers' sortie of Ergene Qun in almost the same terms as Rashīd al-Dīn, but as a *hijra* which thus gives him a status equal to that of the Prophet Muḥammad who marked the beginning of the Islamic era.<sup>107</sup> But al-Qazwīnī mentions that at Ergene Qun, the two Mongol forefathers, Qiyān and Nūkūz,

102 Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī, 113–114.

103 Denis Sinor, "The Legendary Origin of the Türks," in *Folkloria: Festschrift for Felix J. Oinas* eds. E.V. Žygas and P. Vooheis (Bloomington: Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series, 1982), 246.

104 Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 115.

105 Denis Sinor, "The Legendary Origin of the Türks," 248.

106 *Ta'riḫ-i guzida*, 562.

107 *Ta'riḫ-i guzida*, 562.

had two wives. They met a wolf, with whom they had descendants; but he adds that this tradition is weak (*in rawāyat daʿīf ast*).<sup>108</sup>

We found another attempts to assign the Mongols a place in the biblical tradition. According to Waṣṣāf (d. 728/1328), a group of Shiʿites leaders from Ḥilla established a link between the Genghiskhanids and the biblical prophet Abraham by claiming the latter's wife Qanṭūra (the biblical Keturah) as the ancestress of the Mongols, thereby locating the Genghiskhanids within the Abrahamic paradigm. The incident in question occurred in 1258, when the Shiʿites of Ḥilla sent a delegation with a letter of submission to Hülegü.<sup>109</sup> This Abrahamic genealogy of the Mongols through Qanṭūra added a further dimension of rapprochement the Mongols closer to their Muslim subjects in terms of religion. Abraham is know in Arabic as God's friend (*khalīl*), and in Muslim tradition he was the first *ḥanif*, "one who follows the original and true [monotheistic] religion."<sup>110</sup>

The attempt to "hanafize" the Mongol is also attested by Shabānkarāʿī (d. 1357). He usually follows Juwaynī's account of Genghis Khan's life, but he stresses the close relationship between the Great Khan and God: "Even though he was not a Muslim, he had true friendship with God (*bā ḥadrat-i ʿĪzād ṣadiqī dāsht*)."<sup>111</sup> After the Uṭār massacre, Genghis Khan addressed God and he heard a voice saying: "Go, because We will place them under your rule; We will give the world to you." According to Michal Biran, Shabānkarāʿī places in a monotheistic context Genghis Khan speaking to God and hearing a voice replying to him, a description which brings to mind God's biblical promise to Abraham.<sup>112</sup> The post-conversion sources tried to make Genghis Khan a *ḥanif*, thereby entering him into the monotheistic world order.

In the post-medieval historiography, when the Muslims of Transcaucasia, Daghestan, Crimea and Central Asia were under Russian rule, a rich local historiographical production was preserved.<sup>113</sup> *Daftar-i Genghis-nāma* is a popular work in Turkic, composed by an anonymous author. This text is evidence

108 *Taʾrīkh-i guzida*, 563.

109 Judith Pfeiffer, "Faces Like Shields Covered With Leather: Keturah's Sons in the Post-Mongol Islamicate Eschatological Traditions," in *Horizons of the World: Festschrift for İsenbike Togan*, eds. İlker Evrim Binbaş and Nurten Kılıç-Schubel (Isaki, 2011), 560.

110 Judith Pfeiffer, "Faces Like Shields Covered With Leather: Keturah's Sons in the Post-Mongol Islamicate Eschatological Traditions," 584.

111 Shabānkarāʿī, *Majmaʿ al-ansāb*, 227.

112 Genesis 12:1–3, see Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 119.

113 See Allen J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography and the Bulghar Identity Among the Tatars and Bachkirs of Russia* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

for the spread of the legends concerning the Mongols.<sup>114</sup> It was probably written in the late seventeenth century. Forty manuscripts survive, some complete, others incomplete, proof of its popularity. The author relies on Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* as well as numerous oral traditions. In this text, the genealogy of Genghis Khan once again goes back to Japhet, but he is also considered to be the son of Alan Qo'a.<sup>115</sup> The analogy with Maryam is obvious, enabling the author to Islamize the Great Khan. But the event is presented in a more miraculous fashion than in earlier Muslim sources. Genghis Khan's father, named Duyin Bayan, was conceived by a light beam which visited the daughter of Altan Khan, the Chinese (or Jurchen) emperor. Sent away due to her pregnancy, she found refuge among the Kiyat lineage and gave birth to Duyin. When he came of age, he married Alan Qo'a, daughter of a sultan related to Altan Khan. She gave him three sons, but Duyin did not think they were worthy of succeeding him. At the end of his life, Duyin promised his followers that after his demise he would be father to a worthy son. After Duyin's death, his three sons went near Alan Qo'a's tent. They saw a radiant sunshine fallen from heaven that made them lose consciousness. When they awoke, they saw a bluish-grey wolf with a horse's mane coming out of the tent. He cried: "Genghis, Genghis," and disappeared in the forest. Alan Qo'a's son was named Genghis. He was born with the seal of the prophet [sic] Gabriel on his shoulder which resembled the back of a wolf.<sup>116</sup>

According to Michal Biran, the prominent place given to the wolf in this tradition reflects the Turkic-shamanistic background. But it includes monotheistic elements. The seal of Gabriel reflects the seal of prophethood that Muḥammad bore between his shoulders. And in the Qur'ān Gabriel was God's messenger who was sent to impregnate Maryam and to tell her about the virgin birth.<sup>117</sup> The accounts in *Daftar-i Genghis-nāma* use the figure of Genghis Khan to enhance the prestige of the historiographical traditions of the steppe. The Muslims, faced with the Russians, thus asserted their own identity while using these Islamized legends to preserve their own cultural traditions.

The historiography combines legendary and fictional elements, which some historians long considered fabulous tales devoid of historical value. But when studying historiography one must bear in mind that one is studying "propaganda," as Patrick Geary rightly emphasized. Much of the historical literature

114 Allen J. Frank, *Islamic Historiography*, 15–17.

115 Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 115.

116 On this text see Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 117–118.

117 Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 118.

served to justify political ambitions. It is therefore no surprise that the need to legitimate power was the starting point of a rich legendary creativity. The written chronicles are, as Cassiodorus termed them in his time, *imagines historiarum*—images of histories, pictures.<sup>118</sup>

The author of a chronicle, as well as the author of an epic or fictional work, recounts events that structure the text, while placing them in an overall framework of cultural references. In this respect, we have seen that Firdawsi's *Shāh-nāma* is a perfect example of the integration of the past of ancient Iran into the court culture of the Islamic era.<sup>119</sup> The oral declamation of the *Book of Kings* reactivated the lofty deeds of the past in Iran's Islamic present. Gabriel Spiegel notes that:

The performed text, which we associate with epic [...], represented a periodic, ritual reenactment of the basis values of lay culture by means shared, public recitation of traditional stories [...]. The fundamental goal of oral recitation is, precisely, to revivify the past and to make it live in the present, to fuse past and present [...], into a single collective entity.<sup>120</sup>

The *Book of Kings* represents not only the “cultural memory” of ancient Iran, but also that of the Islamic period. The rulers of the *Shāh-nāma* have often been taken as references “for the creation of a mythology of the activities of the Kings.”<sup>121</sup> Muslim historians found paradigms of justice, rectitude and military valour in the Iranian epic. In *Ghazāwāt-i Hindūstān*, the figure of Farīdūn is several times cited as an *exemplum*. Timur is the Farīdūn “of his time” with an allusion to his *ghazāwāt* activity and the diffusion of Islam in India. It is an allusion to Farīdūn as liberator of Iran from Zahhāq in a parallelism with Timur as liberator of the world from heresy and “infidels.”<sup>122</sup> We can say that the extrapolations of *Shāh-nāma* characters as a literary strategy are used to legitimate the actions of the Muslim Kings.

We have observed that the genealogical scheme takes up a central place in historiography. In the Turkic-Iranian cultural area, heir to ancient Iran, Islam, and the world of the steppe, the fabrication of genealogies gave rise to numer-

118 Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text. The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography*. (Baltimore & London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 101.

119 On court culture, see *Court Culture in the Muslim World: Seventh to Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. A. Fuess and J.-P. Hartung (London & New York: Routledge, 2010).

120 Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, 184.

121 Michele Bernardini, “The *Shāh-nāma* and Timurid Historiography,” in *Shahnama Studies 111*.

122 M. Bernardini, “The *Shāh-nāma* and Timurid Historiography,” in *Shahnama Studies 111*.

ous combinations and linkings.<sup>123</sup> The Buyids, condottieri of humble origins, claimed the title of *shāhānshāh* and fabricated genealogies going back to the Sasanian emperor Bahrām Gūr (420–38).<sup>124</sup> The Samanids, of noble ascent but without royal ancestors, similarly claimed descent from Bahrām Chūbīn.<sup>125</sup> In both cases, the point was to strengthen a noble status dating back to Iran's pre-Islamic past by making oneself part of a prestigious dynasty.<sup>126</sup> The genealogy includes legendary elements into the narrative framework with the aim of legitimizing the present power of a dynasty. The fabrication of a fictional genealogy also makes it possible to adapt the original religious background to a new context:

Through the imposition of genealogical metaphors on historical narrative, genealogy becomes for historiography not only a thematic myth but a narrative *mythos*, a symbolic form that governs the significance of the past.<sup>127</sup>

As we have seen, to give an Islamic tinge to the Mongols' founding legend, most Muslim historians had them descend from Japhet, the son of Noah, while others emphasized the analogy between Alan Qo'a and the Maryam of the Qur'an. Genghis Khan's successors were able to depict themselves as part of a prestigious line. But faced with this imperial line, Baybars, a former slave, had nothing of the kind to offer when he confronted the Ilkhans who criticized his lack of lineage. The Mamluk sultan's panegyrists, like the historiographers, sought to conceal this lack of *nasab* by depicting him as a *ghāzī* sultan whose feats against the Franks and Mongols reactivated the lofty deeds of the first conquerors of Syria. As heir to these figures, Baybars appeared as a warrior of the "reincarnation" and thus joined a fictive lineage of valiant champions of Islam.

123 Clifford E. Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran and the Search for Dynastic Connections with the Past," *Iran* 9 (1973): 57; Denise Aigle, "Figures mythiques et histoire. Réinterprétations et contrastes entre Orient et Occident," in *Figures mythiques des mondes musulmans*, 52–64.

124 Clifford E. Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran," 57. W. Madelung, "The Assumption of the Title *Shāhānshāh* by the Būyids and the Reign of the Daylam (*Dawlat al-Daylam*)," *Journal of the Near Eastern Studies* 28 (1969): 84–108.

125 Clifford E. Bosworth, "The Heritage of Rulership in Early Islamic Iran," 58.

126 Luke Treadwell, "*Shāhānshāh* and al-Malik al-Mu'ayyad. The Legitimation of Power in Sāmānid and Būyid Iran," in *Culture and Memory in Medieval Islam: Essays in Honour of Wilferd Madelung*, eds. F. Daftary and J.W. Meri (London: Tauris, 2003), 318–337.

127 Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text*, 105.

This historiographical process of compensating for a lack of lineage is not proper to Baybars. Maḥmūd of Ghazna too is praised for his conquests. In order to efface his servile origins, his secretaries portrayed him as the *ghāzī* sultan *par excellence*.<sup>128</sup> The accounts of Maḥmūd's *ghazāwāt* in India also revived the conquests of the first centuries of Islam. Al-Farrukhī excelled above all in the eulogistic *qaṣīda*, hence it is not surprising to find references to the exploits of the Sultan in India, together with emphasis on "Maḥmūd as hammer of the pagan idol-worshipper there."<sup>129</sup> The career of Maḥmūd of Ghazna was modelled on two important figures from the Qur'ānic tradition, Moses and Alexander, but also on Farīdūn. The deeds of these memorable heroes were valid *exempla* for the present.<sup>130</sup> Maḥmūd of Ghazna was thus presented as a member of the brotherhood of prophets and warriors. His image as a *ghāzī* sultan survived because his panegyrists were in a storytelling position during his reign.<sup>131</sup> Baybars' figure, the champion of Islam, was also immortalized by the reciters of the *Sīrat Baybars* as they recalled his feats.

The constant reinterpretations, in line with the vicissitudes of history, of figures such as Baybars and Genghis Khan, bear witness to a cultural memory shared by East and West. Historiography celebrates the fame of a dynasty by integrating it into a mythical history dominated by a succession of great ancestors who found, revive, and restore ancient tradition. The reference to origins thus grants legitimacy to the heroes of the present by transforming them into immemorial figures.

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128 It seems that the sultan himself played a part in the construction of this image, see Ali Nooshahr, *The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam. A comparative Study of the Late Medieval and Early Modern Periods* (London & New York: Routledge, 2009).

129 Clifford E. Bosworth, "Farrukhī's Elegy on Maḥmūd of Ghazna," *Iran* 24 (1991): 43–49.

130 *L'exemplum* is used in discourse and sermons from Antiquity, see *Rhétorique et Histoire. L'exemplum et le modèle de comportement dans le discours antique et médiéval* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1980). On the historic interest of the use of *exempla*, not just in homiletic literature but also in historiography, see the fundamental work of Claude Brémond, Jacques Le Goff and Jean-Claude Schmitt, *L'exemplum* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1982); see also Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Political Utility in Medieval Historiography: A Sketch," in *The Past as Text*, 83–98, notes 238–242; *Le tonnerre des exemples: exempla et médiation culturelle dans l'Occident médiéval*, eds. M.A. Polo de Beaulieu, P. Collomb and J. Berlioz (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2010).

131 Ali Nooshahr, *The Ghazi Sultans and the Frontiers of Islam*, 73.

## The Mongols and the Legend of Prester John

In the middle of the twelfth century, news spread among the Franks that a Christian prince of the East would come assist them against the Muslims. The story is told in the chronicle of Otto of Freising (d. 1158), the bishop of Bavaria. A certain Hughes, the bishop of Gabala in Syria, reported to Pope Eugene III in 1145 that a certain John, a king and Nestorian Christian priest, had inflicted a grave defeat on the brother kings of the Persians called Saniardos. This King John, a descendant of the Magi, had decided to rescue the Holy Church of Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> Otto of Freising's account is confirmed by the Islamic sources. It is based on real historical events: the defeat that Saljuq Sultan Sanjar suffered in 1141 against Qara Khitai ruler (*gür qan*) Yelü Dashi (r. 1087–43).<sup>2</sup> This victory over a Muslim ruler by a prince of the East was seen by the Latins as the work of a Christian king, although Yelü Dashi was in fact a Buddhist.

This account gave rise to the famous legend of Prester John, which fascinated the medieval imagination for several centuries, both in the Muslim East and in Europe. Two distinct elements blended into the construction of this legend. The first was a person whose historical reality is attested in all the Islamic sources: the ruler of the Qara Khitai of Transoxiana. The second is a “Letter”

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1 Otto von Freising, *Chronica sive Historia de duabus civitatibus* (Hanovre: Monumentis germaniae Historici, Rerum Germanicarum, 1912), 363–366. Towards the end of the twelfth century, Roger of Howden wrote his *De viis maris*, a book which describes the coasts and other places of Europe and of regions further afield such as Inner Asia. He describes the kingdom of the Saljuq sultan (*Malek Senar*) and says that he fought daily against King John, but does not mention his defeat. See *Du Yorkshire à l'Inde. Une “Géographie” urbaine et maritime de la fin du XII<sup>e</sup> siècle (Roger de Howden?)*, ed. P. Gautier-Dalché (Geneva: Droz, 2005), 217.

2 The Qara Khitai dynasty appears in Chinese sources as Hsi Liao, that is, Western Liao. On the Kitan and Jurchens, see Thomas Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier. Nomadic Empires and China. 221 BC to AD 1737* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 164–186; Herbert Franke, “The Forest Peoples of Manchuria: Kitan and Jurchens,” in *The Cambridge History of Inner Asia*, ed. D. Sinor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 400–423. On the Qara Kitai, see Michal Biran, *The Qara Khitai Empire in Eurasian History: Between China and Islam* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).



supposedly sent by Prester John, described as “King of the Three Indies,” to the emperor of Byzantium, in which he describes himself as a most powerful sovereign and describes the wonders of his kingdom.<sup>3</sup> The letter was a sensation, and was translated into many languages, including several Western vernaculars.

The legend of Prester John spread through all levels of society and all forms of literature, as did his “Letter” thanks to various translations. The legend’s final manifestation came to an end with the plans of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century. They thought Prester John’s kingdom to be located in Ethiopia, a country with which they had formed an alliance against the Muslims, but the conflict between myth and reality led them to abandon the quest for Prester John in 1514, having realized that the legend was quite misleading.<sup>4</sup> The persistence of this legend throughout several centuries is evidence of its vitality and its ability to adapt to changing historical, religious and cultural circumstances and transform itself to suit them.<sup>5</sup> The figure of Prester John was most popular at the time of the Mongols, as we can tell from his appearance in the accounts of the missionaries and travellers who had traversed the empire of Genghis Khan, in the Latin chronicles, and in French and Eastern Christian sources. One may suppose that both the figure of Prester John and the “Letter” played a major role in the spread of this legend, which has been the subject of a good

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3 On the lack of any precise information as to where this region was located, see Jean Richard, “The Relatio de Davide as source for Mongol History and the Legend of Prester John,” in *Proceedings of the 35th Permanent International Altaistic Conference* (Taipei, 1993), 417–429.

4 See, for example, Jean Aubin’s studies on the legend of Prester John in sixteenth-century Portugal: “L’ambassade de Prêtre Jean à D. Manuel,” *Mare Luso-indicum* 3 (1976): 1–56; “Le prêtre Jean devant la censure portugaise,” *Bulletin des Études portugaises et brésiliennes* 41 (1980): 33–57.

5 A good summary analysis concerning the legend of Prester John by Luis Filipe Thomaz, “Entre l’histoire et l’utopie: le mythe du Prêtre Jean,” in *Les civilisations dans le regard de l’autre. Actes du colloque international Paris, 13 et 14 décembre 2001* (Paris: UNESCO, 2002), 117–142, notes, 269–279. See also Jean Richard, “L’Extrême-Orient légendaire au Moyen Âge: Roi David et Prêtre Jean,” *Annales d’Ethiopie* 2 (1947): 225–242; “The Relatio de Davide,” 417–429; *Au-delà de la Perse et de l’Arménie. L’Orient latin et la découverte de l’Asie intérieure* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2005), 17–39; David Morgan, “Prester John and the Mongols,” in *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, eds. Ch. F. Beckingham and B. Hamilton (Aldershot, 1999), 159–170; Charles F. Beckingham, “The Achievements of Prester John,” *An Inaugural Lecture at the School of Oriental and African Studies* (London, 1966). Reprinted in *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, 1–24; Igor de Rachewiltz, “Prester John and Europe’s Discovery of East Asia,” in *The Thirty-Second George Ernest Morison Lecture in Ethnology 1971* (Canberra, 1972), 59–74; Matteo Salvatore, “The Ethiopian Age of Exploration: Prester John’s Discovery of Europe, 1306–1458,” *Journal of World History* 21/4 (2010): 593–627.

deal of research over several decades, albeit not from the perspective adopted here. As a first step, I will briefly outline the historical context in which the legend took shape, a prerequisite to understanding the evolution of the figure of Prester John in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

### Inner Asia on the Eve of the Mongol Invasions

Little is known about the Mongols prior to their entry into history at the time of their first conquests in the thirteenth century. In T'ang Chinese historiography their name appears as *Meng-wu*.<sup>6</sup> The location of the Mongols' territories had brought them into contact with China, which unlike the steppe tribes had a written historiographical tradition. The ancestors of Temüjin, the future Genghis Khan, belonged to the Borjigin clan. On the eve of Temüjin's birth, the most powerful tribes in eastern Inner Asia were the Tatars, the Merkit, and two tribes that had largely converted to Nestorian Christianity, the Naiman and the Kerait.<sup>7</sup> The Mongols' hereditary enemies were the Tatars. They poisoned Temüjin's father, Yesügei, when his son was only eight years old.

Having come of age, Temüjin formed an alliance with Toghrl Khan, chief of the Kerait, in memory of the relationship of "blood brother" (*anda*) that had linked the latter to his father. Temüjin, while a vassal of Toghrl Khan, succeeded in eliminating the Tatars. In 1197, the Jurchen of northern China granted Toghrl Khan the prestigious title of *vang qan* (*ong qan*),<sup>8</sup> while Temüjin received a lesser title, that of *ja'ut quri* (commander of a hundred).<sup>9</sup>

The division of power between Toghrl Khan/Ong Khan and Temüjin could not last long. In 1203, the future Great Khan eliminated his rival and then, in 1204, he brought the Naiman under his control, crushing their chief Tayan Khan. The latter's son, Küchlüg, took refuge with Yelü Zhilugu (r. 1178–1211) of the Qara Khitai who gave him his daughter in marriage. But not long after, Küchlüg eliminated his benefactor. Having converted to Buddhism, he adopted an anti-Muslim stance, which was strongly in contrast to the religious policy of

6 Igor de Rachewiltz, "The Name of the Mongols in Asia and Europe: A Reappraisal," *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 27 (1996): 199–210.

7 On the Kerait, see Isenbike Togan, *Flexibility & Limitation in Steppe Formations. The Kerait Khanate & Chinggis Khan* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

8 This, in the form "Ong Khan," is the name by which the Kerait chief appears in the Islamic and Latin sources.

9 *Secret History* § 134.

the Qara Khitai rulers.<sup>10</sup> In 1205 Temüjin, by then the uncontested lord of the steppe, founded the “Great Mongol State” (*yeke monggol ulus*) during an assembly (*quriltai*) of all the chiefs, taking the title Genghis Khan. These struggles for power between the various tribal chiefs of Inner Asia are the background against in which the legend of Prester John took shape, with the supposed Christian king being identified with various successive rulers of the steppe.

### Western Reactions to the Mongol Advance

The powers of Europe barely concerned themselves with the westward advance of the Mongols while the latter were, in 1236–39, subduing the nomadic populations of the banks of the Volga and the Urals,<sup>11</sup> the great cities of Russia, and finally Ukraine, which fell in 1239–40. At this time, the Latin West was first and foremost seeking to identify this hitherto unknown people. When the name Tatar<sup>12</sup> first became known, the Benedictine monk of St Albans, Matthew Paris (d. 1259), transformed it into Tartar (*dicti Tartari*),<sup>13</sup> by allusion to the pit in Hell into which the damned are flung. The Dominican Julian of Hungary, sent to the Caucasus and Volga regions by King Bela IV in 1236–37, wondered: “Who are the Tartars and to what sect do they belong to” (*quod autem sint Tartari cujusve secte*)?<sup>14</sup> Almost fifty years later, in his account of his voyage to the Holy Land and Persia (1288–91), Ricoldo da Monte di Croce once more expresses wonder at not having found any reference to “the identity of this people, composed of such an innumerable throng, of which nothing clear is written in the holy

10 It was for this reason that in 1218 the Qara Khitai territories fell to the Mongols without serious fighting, see Michal Biran, “Like a Mighty Wall: The Armies of the Qara Khitai (1124–1218),” *JSAI* 25 (2001): 44–91.

11 These were known in the Byzantine, Russian and Islamic sources respectively as Cumans, Polovsky and Qipčâq. See Peter Golden, “Wolves, Dogs and Qipčâq Religion,” *AOASH* 50/1–3 (1997): 87–97; “Religion Among the Qipčâq of Medieval Eurasia,” *CAJ* 42 (1998): 180–237.

12 In most of the Latin sources, as in the Arabic ones, the Mongols are thus termed. The Franciscan chronicler Salimbene di Adam, however, notes that the name of the Mongols was not “Tartar” but “Tatar”: “*et quod Tãttati appellantur, non Tartari*,” *Cronica* 1:312. On Salimbene di Adam, see Olivier Guyotjeannin, *Salimbene de Adam, un chroniqueur franciscain* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1995), 16–32.

13 Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* III:488.

14 *Lettre de Julien de Hongrie et rapport intitulé De facto Ungarie magne a fratre Ricardo invento tempore domini Gregorii pape noni*, ed. László Bendefy, *Archivum Europae Centro-Orientalis* 3 (1937): 35.

books or ancient histories, nor [to] how such a great people can have remained hidden.”<sup>15</sup>

But when the Mongol armies arrived at the gates of Europe, the Latin West finally took notice of the danger. Discovering these peoples coming from unknown lands, the West suddenly faced the utter otherness of an “Other.” Matthew Paris transformed the Mongols into a “detestable race of Satan” (*plebs Sathanae detestanda*). Recalling the words of the envoys of the head of the Nizārī, the Ismāʿīlī of Syria,<sup>16</sup> to the king of France, he presents them as monstrous men who had arisen from beyond the mountains of the north.<sup>17</sup> Discovering the identity of the Mongols meant assigning them an origin, which could only have its source in ancient times. Salimbene di Adam compared the Mongol invasions of Europe to those Italy had suffered in Antiquity at the hands of the Vandals, the Huns whose chief Attila was considered the scourge of God (*flagellum Dei*),<sup>18</sup> the Goths, the Lombards, and, finally, the Tatars (*Tattari*) who could thus represent the last invasion of the Italian peninsula.<sup>19</sup> Salimbene di Adam implicitly assimilates the Mongols to the peoples of Gog and Magog, an identification which has the advantage of biblical antecedents.

The Papacy and the sovereigns of the West tried to inform themselves about the aggressors.<sup>20</sup> Pope Innocent IV (1243–54), in his brief *Dei Virtus* dated 3 January 1245, lists the “remedy against the Tartars” (*remedium contra Tartaros*) as one of the questions to be considered at the council called for June that year.<sup>21</sup> But even before the council met, he decided to contact the aggressors and attempt to dissuade them from another attack on Christendom. He drew up two letters to the Tartars. In the first, *Dei patris immense*, dated 5 March 1245, he gives an account of Christian doctrine.<sup>22</sup> In the second, *Cum non solum homines*, dated 13 March, he threatens the Tartars with divine wrath should

15 Riccold de Monte Croce, *Pérégrination en Terre sainte et au Proche-Orient. Lettres sur la chute de Saint-Jean d'Acre*, ed. and trans. R. Kappler (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1977), 94.

16 In Western sources, the head of the Syrian Ismāʿīlī is called the “Old Man of the Mountain” (*Veteris de Monte*), Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* III:488. See also Bernard Lewis, “Kamāl al-Dīn’s Biography of Rašīd al-Dīn Sinān,” *Arabica* 13/3 (1966): 225–267.

17 Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* III:488–489.

18 Salimbene di Adam, *Cronica* I:315.

19 Salimbene di Adam, *Cronica* I:315–317.

20 Pope Gregory IX came up with the idea of a crusade against the Mongols in Hungary, see Jean Richard, *La papauté et les missions d’Orient* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1977), 68; Peter Jackson, “The Crusade Against the Mongols (1241),” *The Journal of the Ecclesiastical History* 42/1 (1991): 1–18.

21 Jean Richard, *La papauté et les missions d’Orient*, 70.

22 Lupprian, 142–145.

they attack Christian lands again.<sup>23</sup> These letters were given to three missionaries: two Dominicans, Ascelino of Cremona and Andrew of Longjumeau, and a Franciscan, John of Plano Carpini.<sup>24</sup>

The Pope's first missionaries were the two Dominicans, both of whom travelled to the Levant.<sup>25</sup> Their mission was not only to make contact with the Mongol authorities, but also to pursue the attempts to reunite the Eastern churches under the authority of the Papacy. Ascelino of Cremona left Lyons in March 1245. On 24 May 1247 he arrived north of the Arax, where Baiju, the Mongol general in charge of the provinces of Tabriz and Armenia, had his camp.<sup>26</sup> On his journey through the Near East, Ascelino of Cremona was joined by the Dominican Simon of St Quentin, who knew eastern languages.<sup>27</sup> In Tbilisi, site of the most easterly Dominican monastery, he also took Guichard of Cremona as a companion. They were to act as his interpreters.

Andrew of Longjumeau left Lyons around the same time, in spring of 1245. At Tabriz in 1246, he came across a Mongol detachment, but he did not go all the way to Baiju's camp. This mission is little documented in the sources, but some information can be found in Matthew Paris' *Chronica majora*. He attests to the Mongols' favourable attitude to the Eastern Christians and the role that the latter played in relations between the Franks and the conquerors.<sup>28</sup> Andrew of Longjumeau later made a second visit to Mongol territory, this time at the request of Louis IX. In December of 1248, the king of France received envoys from Eljigidei, Güyük's governor in Azerbaijan, in Cyprus. They announced good tidings and gave the king a letter speaking of a military alliance against

23 Lupprian, 147–149. On these letters of Pope Innocent IV and the Mongols' replies, see Jean Richard, "Ultimatums mongols et textes apocryphes," *CAJ* 17 (1973): 212–222.

24 The history of these missions has been studied by Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* XXIII:3–30; XXIV:225–335; XXVII:2–84. See also, J. Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient*; Igor de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans* (London, 1971).

25 See Peter Jackson, "Early Missions to the Mongol Empire: Carpini and his Contemporaries," *The Hakluyt Society, Annual Report* (1994): 15–32.

26 Baiju had been appointed governor of these regions between 1242 and 1256 by the regent Töregene. Nestorian Christianity was very active in Tabriz province following Ögödei's appointment in 1235 of Rabban Ata, a Syrian Nestorian cleric who had many churches built.

27 Jean Richard (ed.), *Histoire des Tartares*, "Introduction," 13.

28 On this mission, Jean Richard, *Au-delà de la Perse et de l'Arménie*, 59–73. On Rabban Ata's letters to Louis IX and Frederick II, see Pierre-Vincent Claverie, "Deux lettres inédites de la première mission d'André de Longjumeau en Orient (1246)," *Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes* 158 (2000): 283–292.

the Mamluks.<sup>29</sup> Louis IX then entrusted Andrew of Longjumeau with his reply to Güyük at Qaraqorum. When he arrived, the Great Khan had died. His widow Oghul Qaimish, who was acting as regent, treated Louis IX as a mere tributary. In 1251, Andrew of Longjumeau returned to the king in Caesarea.

The Franciscans did not take the Levant route. John of Plano Carpini was the first missionary to go to Asia via Russia. He too left Lyons around the same time as the Dominicans, on 16 April 1245. At Breslau he took as companion and interpreter Benedict Polonus. The two men arrived at the camp of Batu, who, due regard to the mission's diplomatic importance, sent them on to Güyük. John of Plano Carpini returned to Lyons in the late days of 1247. There are two accounts of his mission. He himself, on his return to the papal court, wrote his *Ystoria Mongalorum*.<sup>30</sup> An earlier account of this mission, the *Hystoria Tartarorum*, was written by a Bohemian or Polish Franciscan. It was completed on 20 July 1247, while John of Plano Carpini was staying in the region. This first version lays out the events in a somewhat different order.<sup>31</sup>

William of Rubruc, for his part, went to the Mongols on his own initiative, for religious motives. He wished to establish a mission on their territory.<sup>32</sup> In 1248 he accompanied King Louis IX on the crusade to Egypt and stayed in Palestine until 1252, where he met Andrew of Longjumeau who told him of the Mongols' attitude of indifference to all religions, as well as the role and influence of the Nestorian clergy. There were also rumours in circulation about the conversion to Christianity of Batu's son, Sartaq. William of Rubruc left the Holy Land with letters of recommendation from Louis IX to the prince of the Golden Horde, intended to ease his passing. His mission included another Franciscan,

29 Jean Richard, "D'Älğigidaï à Ğazan: la continuité d'une politique franque chez les Mongols d'Iran," in *L'Iran face à la domination mongole*, 57–63; Denise Aigle, "The Letters of Eljigidei, Hülegü, and Abaqa: Mongol Overtures or Christian Ventriloquism?" *Inner Asia* 7/2 (2005): 145–152, and chapter 8.

30 *Ystoria Mongalorum* 1:27–130. See Paul Pelliot, *Recherches sur les chrétiens d'Asie centrale et d'Extrême-Orient* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1973), 3–74.

31 On the different transmissions of John of Plano Carpini's account, see Georges D. Painter, *The Vinland Map and the Tatar Relation by R.A. Skelton, Thomas E. Marston, and George D. Painter* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 1995), 21–27. See also Cristina Lungarotti, "Le due redazioni dell'Historia Mongalorum," in Giovanni di Pian di Carpine, *Storia dei Mongoli*, eds. P. Daffinà, C. Leonardi, M.C. Lungarotti, R. Menestò and L. Petech (Spoleto, 1989), 79–92; Enrico Menestò, "La Tradizione manoscritta," in *Storia dei Mongoli*, 100–216; Donald Ostrovski, "Second-redaction Additions in Carpini's *Ystoria Mongalorum*," in *Adelphotes: A Tribute to Omeljan Pritsak by his Students*. Cambridge, Mass. = *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 14 (1989): 522–550; Peter Jackson, "Early Mission to the Mongols," 15.

32 Peter Jackson, "William of Rubruck: A Review Article," *JRAS* (1987): 92–97.

Bartolomeo of Cremona, a French secretary named Gosset, and a Frankish translator whose name remains a topic for discussion.<sup>33</sup> The travellers left Acre in early 1253 and arrived at Sartaq's camp on the lower Volga. Sartaq, considering that some of the matters at hand were beyond his authority, sent William of Rubruc and his companions to his father Batu's camp. The letters of Louis IX, which had been translated into Arabic and Syriac in the Holy Land, were now rendered into Turkic by Armenian priests.<sup>34</sup> The Khan did not understand the precise meaning of Louis IX's letter and decided to send William of Rubruc before Möngke, who had been elected in 1251.<sup>35</sup>

In all the sources, the transmission of the information about Prester John, and as a result its reliability, presents many difficulties. In some cases, as with William of Rubruc and John of Plano Carpini, the travellers themselves wrote an account of their journey.<sup>36</sup> In others, reports on their missions have been preserved only by historians who included them in their chronicles. Such is the case for Ascelino of Cremona, whose account has come to us only indirectly through Simon of St Quentin's *Historia Tartarorum*, the original text of which, furthermore, has survived only in a probably abbreviated form in Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum historiale*.<sup>37</sup> Finally, in some cases the account of the journey may have been orally transmitted to an intermediary, who then composed a text that conformed to his own literary usages. This is probably the case for Marco Polo's *Travels*, whose manuscript textual tradition in many languages is very complex.<sup>38</sup> This is not, in fact, a travel narrative as such, but a description of the world, a "book of marvels."<sup>39</sup> The material conditions of the transmission of the texts have thus enriched the materials that we have on Prester John. The curves and changes of perspective that mark their transmission reflect

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33 See *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck. His Journey to the Court of the Great Khan Möngke, 1253–1255*, trans. Peter Jackson, with introduction, notes and appendices by Peter Jackson and David Morgan (London: The Hakluyt Society, 1990), appendix 1, 279.

34 One may note that Christians were acting as interpreters at a time when multilingualism was necessary. On this question see chapter 8.

35 Jean Richard, "Sur les pas de Plancarpin et de Rubrouck: la lettre de saint Louis à Sartaq," *Journal des savants* (1977): 56–59.

36 We have, however, two somewhat different versions of John of Plano Carpini's account, with numerous variations between the manuscripts.

37 Jean Richard (ed.), *Histoire des Tartares*, 7. See also Gregory Guzman, "Simon of Saint-Quentin and the Dominican Mission to the Mongol Baiju: A reappraisal," *Speculum* XLVI/46 (1971): 232–249.

38 Marco Polo/Kappler, 23–25.

39 Marco Polo/Kappler, 14–18.

how the events in question were seen by those who passed them on at different moments in history.

In the accounts left by these authors, the information on Prester John always appears in connection with the coming to power of Genghis Khan. An underlying element of truth can be observed, but the passage of time since Genghis Khan's rise to power, at least half a century earlier, and the fact that the information had been collected orally, has confused the chain of events and the names of the protagonists. The legend has also absorbed numerous apocryphal traditions. Nevertheless, all these accounts, except that of John of Plano Carpini, have a certain number of common features. A basic pattern can be discerned in which the various authors have fitted extra details or entire additional elements. The pattern is as follows: the Tatars were without a leader. They were vassals of Prester John (or of a figure identified with him). Genghis Khan became their chief and marched on Prester John, inflicting a grave defeat on him. An analysis of these accounts shows that the figure of Prester John plays an active role in the symbolic integration of the Mongols into the history of Christendom, in an eschatological perspective.

### The Evolving Figure of Prester John

Jacques de Vitry, the bishop of Acre, played a major role in the first phase of the dissemination of the legend in the early thirteenth century. In 1221, during the Crusader siege of Damietta, various apocryphal texts,<sup>40</sup> as well as one described as "historical" by Paul Pelliot, were in circulation.<sup>41</sup> This text, written in Arabic, supposedly reported events which had recently taken place in Inner Asia: Genghis Khan's conquests on the steppes and the invasion of eastern Iran by the Mongol armies.<sup>42</sup> This account has survived only in Latin, in the form of three texts known collectively as the *Relatio de Davide*. The most complex version, *Historia gestorum David Regis Indorum*, was transmitted by Jacques de Vitry in his seventh letter, sent on 18 April 1221 to Pope Honorius III, Duke Leopold of Austria and the chancellor of the University of Paris. Jacques de Vitry states that he is giving a summary of it.

40 These apocalyptic texts have been analysed by Paul Pelliot, "Deux passages de 'La prophétie de Hannan, fils d'Isaac,'" in *Prester John, the Mongols and the Ten Lost Tribes*, 113–137.

41 Paul Pelliot, "Deux passages de 'La prophétie de Hannan, fils d'Isaac,'" 113.

42 On the advance of the Mongol armies in Inner Asia, see Paul Buell, "Early Mongol Expansion in Western Siberia and Turkestan (1207–1219): a Reconstruction," *CAJ* 36 (1992): 1–32.



The *Relatio de Davide* recounts the exploits of a certain David, king of the Indies, who, according to Jacques de Vitry, was called Prester John by “the vulgar.”<sup>43</sup> The narrative begins with David’s genealogy, which is traced to a Christian named Bulaboga. According to the *Relatio de Davide*, David’s people recognized the authority of the king of the Persians, called Chancana “which means king of kings.” David mustered an army and vanquished the Persian monarch.<sup>44</sup>

This text has been the subject of many commentaries by historians.<sup>45</sup> The link between David and Prester John is probably the work of Jacques de Vitry, who inserts an element based on the famous “Letter of Prester John” which, as has been stated above, was widely known at the time. In any case, in 1221, the figure of Prester John was still based on the real figure of Yelü Dashi, as presented by Otto of Freising in the form of a powerful Christian king who had defeated a Muslim sultan in 1141.

The news of the Mongols’ advance into the eastern Islamic lands revived hopes in the West. The Patriarch of Jerusalem, Raoul of Mérencourt (1215–1224), wrote a letter when the *Relatio de Davide*<sup>46</sup> became known in Europe, probably in late spring 1221. In this letter, he states that an eschatological tract entitled the *Book of the Fulfilment of the New Testament* (*Liber executionis Novi Testamenti*) had for some time been known to Christians in the East. This tract claimed that the Tartars were heading for Europe, drawing the “son of God” on a golden chariot.<sup>47</sup> The Papacy seems to have accepted this eschatological understanding. In a letter dated 20 June 1221, Pope Honorius III announced the coming of reinforcements from the land of the East to deliver the Holy Land, clearly establishing the link with Prester John. In July 1221, Oliver the Scholasticus portrayed the “son of God” mentioned in the *Liber executionis Novi Testamenti* as “the executor of divine vengeance called to be the hammer

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43 *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, 141.

44 *Lettres de Jacques de Vitry*, 141.

45 Jean Richard, “L’Extrême-Orient légendaire au Moyen Âge,” 227–228; “The Relatio de Davide,” 147; David Morgan, “Prester John and the Mongols,” 160; Axel Klopprogge, *Ursprung und Ausprägung des abendländischen Mongolenbildes im 13. Jahrhundert. Ein Versuch zur Ideengeschichte des Mittelalters* (Wiesbaden, 1993), 115–123.

46 Pierre-Vincent Claverie, “L’apparition des Mongols sur la scène politique occidentale (1220–1223),” *Le Moyen Age* 105 (1999): 606. This letter was edited by Jean Richard, “Une lettre concernant l’invasion mongole?” *Bibliothèque de l’École des Chartes* 119 (1961): 243–245. New edition by Claverie, “L’apparition des Mongols,” 612–613.

47 Pierre-Vincent Claverie, “L’apparition des Mongols,” 606.

of Asia.”<sup>48</sup> The *Book of the Fulfilment of the New Testament* is older than the missionary accounts that link Prester John to the rise of Genghis Khan, but it shares the eschatological perspective in which Christendom then viewed the advance of the Mongol forces into Muslim territory. These events aroused the hopes of the Latins, who considered the leader of these warriors to be a potential ally.

*Prester John, a Mighty King of the Indies*

John of Plano Carpini dedicates the fifth chapter of his *Ystoria Mongalorum* to relating a truthful “saga of Genghis Khan.” His history of the war between Prester John and the Mongols clearly distinguishes his account from those of the other missionaries. There is a clear discrepancy between this historical section, of a legendary nature, and the rest of John of Plano Carpini’s work, based as it is on precise personal observation.<sup>49</sup> Actually, this campaign was fought by Mongol troops against the son of the Kh<sup>w</sup>ārazm-Shāh, Jalāl al-Dīn Mengüberti, who had managed to flee to Ghazna after the conquest of Transoxiana. His army was wiped out on the banks of the Indus in November 1221 by Genghis Khan’s troops.

John of Plano Carpini’s account does not correspond to the historical events as attested in the Islamic sources. According to the Franciscan, the king of this land, whom “the vulgar call Prester John” (*qui vulgo Iohannes Presbiter appellatur*), set out against the Mongols:

He put leather dummies on horseback with fire inside them. Behind them he mounted men with bellows and it was with a great many of these dummies that he succeeded in vanquishing the Tartars [. . .].<sup>50</sup>

An account of voyage, although it tells the story of a real journey, is full of *topoi*, most of them taken from works of fiction. Elements from the *Alexander romance* are to be found in this tale: for example, the battle between Alexander and Porus,

48 Pierre-Vincent Claverie, “L’apparition des Mongols,” 607. He considers that the various translations of the *Liber executionis Novi Testamenti* may support the hypothesis that it was a propaganda work which might have been composed by Nestorians of northern Mesopotamia.

49 Vincent of Beauvais included the account of Simon of St Quentin and John of Plano Carpini in his *Speculum historiale*. He gives the account of the battle between Prester John and Genghis Khan twice, not realizing that this was one and the same battle, see Michèle Guéret-Laferté, *Sur les routes de l’empire mongol. Ordre et rhétorique des relations de voyage aux XIII<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1994), 302.

50 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 59; *Storia dei Mongoli*, 258–259.

the king of India. The latter's elephants were routed by Macedonian soldiers who terrified the enemy using bronze statues with red heads filled with fire placed on chariots.<sup>51</sup>

John of Plano Carpini's main informants were the Russian and Hungarian clerics at Qaraqorum. Some of these had spent more than twenty years among the Mongols and were fully acquainted with their history and language (*et sciebant omnia facta eorum, qui sciebant linguam*).<sup>52</sup> Alexander Yourtchenko has shown that John of Plano Carpini included, in his history of Genghis Khan, legends that were circulating orally in Asia at the time which themselves originated in eastern versions of the *Alexander romance*.<sup>53</sup> According to Yourtchenko, it is possible that the Mongols themselves contributed to the development of the "Romance of Genghis Khan."<sup>54</sup> John of Plano Carpini was no doubt receptive to these legends because aspects of them were familiar to him. In any case, he is the only thirteenth century author to paint Prester John as a powerful figure. But the perception of the latter would very soon be transformed.

### *Prester John, a Bad Christian King*

Simon of St Quentin devotes a chapter of his *Historia Tartarorum* to describing Genghis Khan's rise to power. It is depicted as occurring at the expense of a certain David, the son of Prester John, who was unable to resist the Mongol forces and was crushed. At Baiju's camp in Sisian in Armenia, where Simon of St Quentin stayed three months (from 24 May to 25 July 1247), he no doubt heard tell of the exploits of Genghis Khan, who in 1203 had eliminated his overlord Toghriq Khan, the Christian king of the Kerait referred to above. He invokes a divine logic to account for this defeat: "God permitted that David and

51 See the remarks of Painter, *The Vinland Map and the Tatar Relation*, 68–69, n. 3 and 4.

52 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 122–123; *Storia dei Mongoli*, 324.

53 Alexander Yourtchenko, "Ein asiatisches Bilderrätsel für die westliche Geschichtsschreibung. Ein unbekanntes Werk aus dem 13. Jahrhundert (Der "Tschingis Khan-Roman")," *Zentralasiatische Studien* 28 (1998): 48–49, n. 12. On the *Alexander romance* in Inner Asia, see John Boyle, "The Alexander Legend in Central Asia," *Folklore* 85 (1974): 217–228.

54 A Mongol version of the *Alexander romance*, written in the Uyghur alphabet, existed, of which we have only fragments. As this was composed in the first half of the fourteenth century, it cannot have provided a framework for the "saga of Genghis Khan" as assumes Michel Guéret-Laferté, *Sur les routes de l'Empire mongol*, 300. On this Mongol text, see Francis W. Cleaves, "An Early Mongolian Version of the Alexander Romance," *HJAS* 22 (1959): 2–99.

his people were vanquished on account of their sins" (*Deo permittente regisque David et populi sui exigentibus peccatis*).<sup>55</sup>

William of Rubruc does not namely mention Prester John, but he speaks of a "pastor of great power, who ruled a people called Naiman who were Nestorian Christians" (*pastor potens et dominus super populum qui dicebatur Naiman, qui erant christiani nestorini*). This pastor proclaimed himself king and the Nestorians called him "King John" (*rex Johannes*).<sup>56</sup> The Franciscan missionary does not attach much credibility to the accounts of his informants: "The Nestorians say more than is true of King John, and make much noise about nothing."<sup>57</sup> According to William of Rubruc, this King John died heirless, and his brother Unc-chan [Ong Khan]<sup>58</sup> succeeded him. The latter, however, was defeated by Genghis Khan because he had abandoned his faith in Christ.

The story about "King John" recounted by William of Rubruc is based on real historical events. As we have seen, when Genghis Khan was imposing his hegemony on the steppe, he eliminated the chief of the Naiman, Tayan Khan. Tayan Khan's son Küchlüg then fled to the Qara Khitai ruler. Küchlüg later seized power for himself, which William of Rubruc interprets as follows: "the pastor [John] proclaimed himself king." Küchlüg subsequently converted to Buddhism, upon which William of Rubruc's commentary is that "Ong Khan renounced his faith in Christ" (*dimisso cultu Christi*).<sup>59</sup> At the time the Franciscan missionary was collecting information, the careers of Tayan Khan and his son Küchlüg had become so vague in the memories of his informants that he confuses the former chief of the Naiman with his son, the usurper of Qara Khitai power.

A very similar account appears in Barhebraeus' Syriac chronicle.<sup>60</sup> Ong Khan and King John have become one and the same: "Ūnk Khān, that is John, king of the Christians, was reigning over a certain tribe of the Hūnāyē who were called Krit."<sup>61</sup> Ong Khan is thus correctly presented as the chief of the Kerait. He was eliminated by Genghis Khan in "the Greek year 1694," that is, in 1203, in line with the historical record. But this time Barhebraeus confuses

55 Simon of St Quentin, 51.

56 Guillemus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 206.

57 Guillemus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 206.

58 This was the title granted to Toghrlil, chief of the Kerait, by the Jurchen of northern China while Temüjin was still his vassal.

59 Guillemus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 207.

60 Barhebraeus' account is clearly derived from al-Juwaynī's *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā*. On the connections between the two historians, see Giorgio Borbone, "Barhebraeus e Juwaynī: Un cronista siro et la sua fonte Persiana," *Evo* 27 (2004): 121–144, and chapter 3.

61 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 409; Bar Hebraeus/Budge, 352.

Ong Khan with Küchlüg, the son of the Naiman chief.<sup>62</sup> He explains his defeat as follows:

And it is right to know that this king John of the Krît was not rejected for nothing [...]. He had taken a wife from a tribe of one of the Chinese peoples which was called Kârâketâ. He forsook the Fear (i.e. Religion) of his fathers and worshipped strange gods, and therefore God took away the kingdom and gave it to one who was better than he; and his heart became right before God.<sup>63</sup>

One notes with interest that several biblical citations from the Book of Kings have been included in this narration. God took the kingship from Ong Khan/Küchlüg because, like Amon, the fifteenth king to sit on David's throne, he had reverted to the impiety of his father: "And he forsook the Lord God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the Lord."<sup>64</sup> The figure of Solomon, who had taken foreign wives, is also invoked by the Syriac historian. The one God had forbidden the Israelites such marriages lest their wives led their husbands to worship their own gods. The Lord said to Solomon:

Forasmuch as this is done of thee, and thou hast not kept my covenant and my statutes, which I have commanded thee, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant.<sup>65</sup>

Ong Khan/Küchlüg, who had taken for wife a Buddhist woman of the Qara Khitai, was guilty of the same sin as Solomon. He therefore lost the kingship to "him who had put himself constantly at his service," in other words Genghis Khan, a man "of righteous heart before God." This is an allusion to the Acts of the Apostles. Simon the magician asks Saint Peter for the power to give the Holy Spirit, and Peter replies: "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is no right in the sight of God."<sup>66</sup> The biblical citation redounds to the credit of the Great Khan by implicit contrast.<sup>67</sup>

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62 In writing on the Mongols at the time of Genghis Khan, Barhebraeus relies on al-Juwaynî, who at no point confuses Ong Khan and Küchlüg. The Syriac historian must therefore have made use of oral traditions for some events, see chapter 3.

63 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 409; Bar Hebraeus/Budge, 353.

64 2 Kings 21, 22.

65 1 Kings 11, 11.

66 Acts 8, 21.

67 Barhebraeus' account is based on al-Juwaynî, who mentions the shaman Teb Tenggeri as the person responsible for the success of Genghis Khan's mission. This idea also appears

*Genghis Khan's Great Valour and the Baseness of Prester John*

The legend of Prester John underwent new developments towards the turn of the fourteenth century. Marco Polo, in his *Travels*, was the first author to recount Genghis Khan's rise to power in a positive light.<sup>68</sup> Genghis Khan's ascension might have succeeded not through violence, but rather through good governance, which attracted many subjects to him:

And when those whom he had conquered became aware how well and safely he protected them against all others, and how they suffered no ill at his hands [...], they joined him heart and soul and became his devoted followers.<sup>69</sup>

But this process of peaceful conquest turned violent when Genghis Khan came up against the arrogance of Prester John, who refused to give him his daughter in marriage:

What impudence in this, to ask my daughter to wife! Wist he not well that he was my liegeman and serf? Get ye back to him and tell him that I had liever set my daughter in the fire than give her in marriage to him, and that he deserves death at my hand, rebel and traitor that he is!<sup>70</sup>

The traits attributed to the Saracens in the *chansons de geste* seem to have been used here to describe Prester John. The Christian king is arrogant and considers Genghis Khan to be his serf. He is impulsive and would sooner burn his daughter than give her in marriage to him. He is a braggart and tells the Great Khan that he will kill him. And he is certain of his own strength, declaring, when he hears of the arrival of the Mongol armies: "these be no soldiers."<sup>71</sup> Genghis Khan reacts courageously: "When Genghis Khan heard the brutal message that Prester John had sent him, such rage seized him, for he was a man of a very lofty spirit."<sup>72</sup> Prester John is shown in a negative light compared to Genghis

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at the beginning Hülegü's letter of 1262 to Louis IX, see Jean Richard, *Au-delà de la Perse et de l'Arménie*, 173–182.

68 While the Middle French text of the *Travels* has recently been published (see the general bibliography), for convenience an English translation is cited here: *The Travels of Marco Polo. The Complete Yule-Cordier Edition* (New York: Dover Publications, 1992). On the *The Travels of Marco Polo*, see Peter Jackson, "Marco Polo and his 'Travels,'" *BSOAS* 61/1 (1988): 82–101.

69 *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 238.

70 *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 239.

71 *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 240.

72 *The Travels of Marco Polo*, 240.

Khan. He is impulsive and devoid of wisdom, while his adversary is a man of great valour and self-control.

Marco Polo did not write the account of his travels himself. It is now agreed that during his imprisonment in Genoa in 1298, he had a fellow-prisoner, Rustichello, an Italian romances of chivalry writer, rewrite his story. What precise role did Rustichello play? It is true that traces of oral communication can be found in the work, while the masses of details mentioned are strongly suggestive of notes taken by the traveller. Even if the two men worked together to compose the text, it is possible that Rustichello was responsible for the imposition of a literary form on the material.<sup>73</sup>

Kappler writes:

Rustichello's profession may seem a strange one [...]. His role was that of a kind of cultural intermediary: he adapted and rewrote in French, for the benefit of a partly Italian audience, romances of chivalry [...]. And one must recognize in the work taken as a whole, a mastery of the art of composition whereby Polo's adventure is presented as a triptych in which the parallel outward and homeward voyages unfold around the central panel devoted to Qubilai.<sup>74</sup>

And he adds: "This great work is the outcome of an alchemical process that has not been entirely completed [...]. But Rustichello knows that he is *composing* a book."<sup>75</sup>

Did the Pisan rewriter of courtly romances translate Mongol historical reality by using the personae and vocabulary of the chivalrous romance in order to bridge the cultural gap? It is difficult to be sure. As Peter Jackson has suggested to me, Marco Polo may have been influenced by how Genghis Khan's grandson Qubilai perceived these events. We do know that Marco Polo was in contact with members of Qubilai's entourage and some influence from the Great Khan of China is altogether possible. The other parts of the *Travels* are based, as we have seen, and as was also the case for John of Plano Carpini, on rigorous personal observation, even in the description of the wonders that he discovered in the Far East. Nevertheless, from a literary point of view, the tale uses of typical features of the medieval *chanson de geste*. The question posed here remains a matter of debate, but Abbès Zouache has demonstrated that in

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73 On the collaboration between Rustichello and Marco Polo while the text was being written down, see Marco Polo/Kappler, 19–21.

74 Marco Polo/Kappler, 20.

75 Marco Polo/Kappler, 20.

Western Christian literature, chronicles are often inspired by the *chansons de geste*.<sup>76</sup> It seems that here we are faced with a process similar to the one that integrated Saladin into Western culture in his own lifetime.

### The Mongols as an Arm of Providence

In the early fourteenth century, the figures of Prester John and Genghis Khan underwent a further evolution. The account of Andrew of Longjumeau's second mission (1249–51) is only preserved in Jean de Joinville's *Vie de Saint Louis*.<sup>77</sup> The history of the Mongols given here is once again centred on Genghis Khan's election and his battle against Prester John, but the change in how the two figures are presented is even sharper than it was in Marco Polo's text. In the three chapters that Jean de Joinville dedicates to the Mongols, details of Andrew of Longjumeau's embassy to Qaraqorum, which followed the Mongol mission to Cyprus in 1248, frame the largely legendary account of the events concerning the growth of Genghis Khan's power.

The account of Genghis Khan's election and the revolt of the Tartars against Prester John display a certain number of similarities to the earlier textual tradition, but also departs from it on several points. The Mongols are subject not only to Prester John, but also to the sovereign of Persia and other pagan princes: "In this plain there were the people of the Tartars, and they were subjects of Prester John and the emperor of Persia [...] and several pagan kings."<sup>78</sup>

Like Marco Polo, Jean de Joinville emphasizes the legitimacy of the Mongols' revolt against their overlords: Prester John, the emperor of Persia and the other kings held the Tartars in such contempt that, when they came to pay their tribute, they did not wish to see them but turned their backs on them.<sup>79</sup> A wise man among the Tartars explains to them how they can escape this servitude: they need a chief. There follows an account of the chief's election, on a model that is in line with the legends of the Turkic peoples.<sup>80</sup> The wise man, who

76 Abbès Zouache, "Saladin, l'histoire, la légende," in *Le Bilād al-Šām face aux mondes extérieurs*, 41–72.

77 The text was written between 1305 and 1309 at the request of Joan of Navarre, consort of Philip the Fair.

78 Jean de Joinville, 427.

79 Jean de Joinville, 427.

80 On the legends concerning the election of chiefs in the steppe, see Denis Sinor, "The Making of a Great Khan," 241–256. Michael the Syrian's Syriac chronicle includes a very similar account of the elections of the chiefs of the Turkic peoples, see *Chronique*



is none other than the future Genghis Khan, is elected himself. He decides to fight against Prester John, and God grants him victory. During combat, he spares “those whom they found in religious habit, the priests and the other religious, they did not kill.”<sup>81</sup>

At this point in his account, Jean de Joinville inserts a lengthy tale concerning one of the princes fighting in Genghis Khan’s army. This Mongol prince is lost for three months, and on his return, tells the tale of his adventures. He had gone up:

A very high mound, and at the top he had found a great number of persons, the most beautiful that he had ever seen, the best dressed and the best ornamented. And at the extremity of the mound, he saw a king more beautiful than the others, better dressed, better ornamented, on a golden throne. On the king’s right there sat six crowned kings, well ornamented with precious stones, and as many on his left; near by him, on his right, there was a queen kneeling, who spoke to him and prayed him to think of his people; on his left there knelt a very fair man, who had two wings as bright as the sun, and about the king there was a great number of beautiful persons with wings.<sup>82</sup>

This king, who introduces himself to the Mongol prince as the “master of Heaven and Earth,”<sup>83</sup> charges him with a message for the king of the Tartars: he will grant him power over all the lands, but first the king must hand over to the Mongol prince the priests who were spared in the battle against Prester John, so that they may convert the prince’s people to the Christian religion. In response to the prince’s fears that his lord would not believe his account, the king answers:

You will say to him that he may believe you, so much so that you will go to fight the emperor of Persia with three hundred men, no more, of your people [...] and you will defeat the emperor of Persia, who will fight against you with three hundred thousand armed men and more.<sup>84</sup>

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*de Michel le Syrien. Patriarche jacobite d'Antioche (1166–1199)*, ed. and trans. J.-B. Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899–1910) III:157.

81 Jean de Joinville, 429.

82 Jean de Joinville, 431.

83 Jean de Joinville, 431.

84 Jean de Joinville, 431.

This is a depiction of Christ in Majesty, surrounded by his twelve disciples, his mother Mary and the angel Gabriel, as well as the angels who represent the heavenly court. A biblical reference from the Book of Judges is also inserted into this account. God says to Gideon: “By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand.”<sup>85</sup> The Mongols are thus rendered victorious over their enemies using the same terms that describe Gideon’s victory over the Midianites.

As we have seen, the *Liber executionis Novi Testamenti*, which was circulating in Europe in 1221, had already linked the Mongols to the figure of Christ, covered in precious stones on a golden chariot and shining with a celestial light day and night.<sup>86</sup> This text, written much earlier and in accordance with the eschatological outlook of the time of its composition, nevertheless attributes a mission of salvation to the Mongols. Thomas of Cantimpré also develops this theme in a passage of his *Bonum universale de apibus*, written in 1262–1263.<sup>87</sup> This includes a story similar to that told by Jean de Joinville. The king presents himself to the prince as follows: “I am the God of the Christians, eternal king and lord.” Two Christian priests are charged with converting the prince’s people to the Christian faith.<sup>88</sup> According to Jacques Paviot, the accounts of Thomas of Cantimpré and Jean de Joinville are derived from the same source: Andrew of Longjumeau’s second mission into Mongol territory.<sup>89</sup>

In Jean de Joinville’s account, the knight could be an allusion to St George. He is considered a soldier saint, able to deliver prisoners from the hands of the Saracens and bring them back safe and sound “in the blink of an eye” on his white horse. But here, George becomes the guide of the Mongol prince whose people must convert to Christianity. One must, furthermore, stress the distinction between the prince, whose people are to become Christians, and the rest of the Mongols. As in Simon of St Quentin’s account, they are the instruments of divine providence, but while the Dominican justified the fall of Prester John on the grounds that his people were Nestorians,<sup>90</sup> “Prester John’s men wearing

85 Jgs 7, 7.

86 Pierre-Vincent Claverie, “L’apparition des Mongols,” 606.

87 This passage is reproduced by Lionel Friedman, “Joinville’s Tatar Visionary,” *Medium Aevum* 27/1 (1958): 2. See also Jacques Paviot, “Joinville et les Mongols,” in *Jean de Joinville: de la Champagne au royaumes d’outre-Mer*, ed. D. Quérel (Langres-Saints-Geosmes: Guéniot, 1998), 207–218. As we have seen, this theme of visions is already to be found in al-Juwaynī, in Hülegü’s letter of 1262, and in the Christian sources, both Eastern and Western.

88 Lionel Friedman, “Joinville’s Tatar Visionary,” 2.

89 Jacques Paviot, “Joinville et les Mongols,” 212.

90 The papacy considered the Nestorians to be a sect.

the religious habit” here play a leading role. They are given a pastoral mission and appear as latter-day apostles. Jean de Joinville attributes a mission of salvation to Genghis Khan, transforming the Mongols into a new chosen people.<sup>91</sup>

A very similar to Jean de Joinville’s account is given by the Armenian historian, Hayton, in his *La Flor des Estoires de la terre d’Orient*, which was presented to Pope Clement V in Poitiers in August 1307. Hayton had recently joined the Premonstratensian house in Cyprus.<sup>92</sup> He does not mention Prester John, but this passage includes aspects of the basic pattern shared by the other accounts. The Mongols are subject to their neighbours. One old man amongst them, a poor blacksmith named Canguis [Genghis], sees in a dream an armed knight on a white horse, who says to him:

Canguis, it is the will of immortal God that you be ruler and lord of the Tartars, that they be delivered by you from their long serfdom and that they rule over their neighbours.<sup>93</sup>

The Mongols do not believe him. The following night, he knight reappears to the man and orders him to obey “in the name of God.” Having conquered the peoples of Inner Asia, of whom he becomes the unquestioned chief, Genghis has a new vision of the white knight:

Canguis Can [Genghis Khan], the will of immortal God is that you cross the mountain of Belgian into the West. You will conquer the kingdoms and lands of diverse nations, over them you will have power.<sup>94</sup>

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91 This concept of the Mongols as a new chosen people appears in Abaqa’s letter of 1274 to Urban IV, in which Hülegü is implicitly presented as a “second Moses,” see Denise Aigle, “The Letters of Eljigidei, Hülegü and Abaqa,” 152–154.

92 Christiane Deluz, “La Fleur des histories de la terre d’Orient (introduction),” in *Croisades et Pèlerinages. Récits, chroniques et voyages en Terre sainte XII<sup>e</sup>–XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, ed. D. Régnier-Bohler (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1997), 803. Little is known as to the life of Hayton (born between 1230 and 1245; died ca. 1308–1310). He seems to have spent much of his childhood at the court of his uncle King Het’um I. Hayton dictated the text in French to a cleric who then translated it into Latin (*Flos Historiarum Terre Orientis*) for Pope Clement V. The French and Latin versions, including variants, are published in *Recueil des historiens des croisades. Documents arméniens*, 2 vols., *La Flor des Estoires de la terre d’Orient* 11:113–253 (French), 255–366 (Latin). The French translation used here is that of Ch. Deluz, *La Flor des Estoires de la terre d’Orient*.

93 *La Flor des Estoires de la terre d’Orient*, 826.

94 *La Flor des Estoires de la terre d’Orient*, 828.

At Mount Belgian, where the mountain meets the sea, Genghis Khan is to kneel down facing the East, along with his men, and pray God to show them the path.<sup>95</sup> Having arrived at the right place, he and his fighters carry out the orders conveyed by the knight. When they return, the sea has shifted so as to let them pass.

Hayton claims to collect his information on the Mongols from the stories that his uncle Het'um I told his children and nephews. The Armenian historian probably brought back with him some of the fabulous tales that were circulating in the East, such as those displayed here. It seems several aspects of Hayton's narrative warrant particular attention. The image of the knight may be interpreted as another reference to St George, who has an important position in Armenian and Georgian tradition. In the second vision, the symbol of the knight is combined with a biblical reference: the parting of the Red Sea. God ordered Genghis Khan to cross the mountain of Belgian. This refers to Burqan Qaldun, considered the Mongols' sacred mountain and mentioned in the very first paragraph of the *Secret History of the Mongols*.<sup>96</sup> Genghis Khan's mythical ancestors settled there after crossing a vast stretch of water. There Batachi Khan, the forebear of the future Great Khan's line, was born to them. In Hayton's account Genghis Khan himself appears as a new Moses leading the Mongols, who appear in this context as God's new chosen people. The march of Genghis Khan's armies to the West is thus described by Hayton as a *reconquista* of lands that had fallen under Muslim rule. The second vision suggests that Hayton's account uses the symbolism of the chapter of the Book of Revelation, which begins with the first eschatological battle against the pagan nations:

And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war.<sup>97</sup>

These biblical references, taken together, are intended to lend a spiritual aspect to Genghis Khan's battles. Thus, by attributing this mission of salvation to the Mongol leader and making him the fighter of the good fight, Hayton symbolically integrates the Mongols into the religious history of Christendom.

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95 *La Flor des Estoires de la terre d'Orient*, 829.

96 The Burqan Qaldun is situated as the source of the Tula, Onan and Kerülen rivers, in the Kentei massif.

97 Rv 19, 11.

The accounts of Jean de Joinville and Hayton, which were written down at the same time, probably share the same origin: Andrew of Longjumeau's mission, as suggests Jacques Paviot. These accounts have passed down through the centuries and have been transformed in response to the needs of the time, while more and more fantastic elements added on. One may propose the hypothesis that the tales of the Mongol prince, and, in Hayton's account, of Genghis Khan's vision, probably originate in the account of the Great Khan's election as reported by the Persian historian al-Juwaynī. In this account, the shaman Teb Tenggeri presents the election of Genghis Khan as the will of the God of the Muslims. He declares:

God [*khudāy*] has spoken with me and has said : "I will give all the face of the earth to Temüjin and his children and name him Chingiz-Khan. Bid him administer justice in such and such a fashion."<sup>98</sup>

A Georgian chronicle repeats al-Juwaynī's account but with Genghis Khan himself taking Teb Tenggeri's part. The Great Khan says:

Went up to a high mountain where Jesus Christ Lord of the World revealed himself, teaching him justice, the true religion, purity, honesty, horror of lying, of theft and all vices and said, "If you observe these precepts I will give for you and all your race all the earth; go and subjugate all the lands you can."<sup>99</sup>

All these traditions derive from the *Secret History*, but in the Mongolian text, in contrast to al-Juwaynī's version, Teb Tenggeri casts doubt on the new leader's legitimacy:

The decree of Eternal Heaven *concerning* the ruler has been *foretold* by *heavenly* signs *as follows*: once they say that Temüjin will hold the nation, once that Qasar will. If you don't strike Qasar by surprise, there is no knowing *what will happen!*<sup>100</sup>

98 Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā* 1:29; Juwaynī/Boyle 1:39. According to Rashīd al-Dīn, people believed that Teb Tenggeri was in the habit of descending from Heaven on a white horse, see Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), 101–102.

99 David Morgan, "Prester John and the Mongols," 161. One may remark that the Georgian historian gives a version very similar to a passage on the Mongol *yāsā* by the Armenian historian Grigor Arkanc'i, see chapter 7.

100 *Secret History* § 244 (Italics from the translator).

Genghis Khan has him put to death shortly thereafter on the pretext that he has been sowing discord among brothers.<sup>101</sup>

The election of Genghis Khan, as told by al-Juwaynī, and the role played therein by Teb Tenggeri, probably lie at the origin of the Christian traditions. This episode in the life of the Great Khan circulated orally among the Nestorian Christians and the Eastern Christians in general. The account, as we have seen above, was transmitted verbatim by Barhebraeus in his Syriac chronicle.<sup>102</sup> But where the Persian and Syriac historians have the shaman Teb Tenggeri address Eternal Heaven of the Mongols, Jean de Joinville, Hayton and the Georgian historian suggest that it was the Christian God who granted Genghis Khan a mission of salvation: that of vanquishing the Muslims, the enemies of the Christians.

The eschatological dimension of the figure of Prester John appears very clearly when one examines how perceptions of him changed over the course of two centuries. The legend of Prester John is one in a long series of theological speculations which began with the fall into the hands of the Muslims in 1144 of Edessa, the first Crusader city of the Levant. The city of Edessa had been considered in some degree “invulnerable.” The legend of Prester John provided an eschatological answer to a concrete political situation. The defeat of Sultan Sanjar in 1141 came just in right time. To the minds of the Christians, this mighty Eastern Christian king would surely continue his march westwards to assist the Crusaders, who were grappling with the Muslims in the lands of the Levant. The legend must also be seen in the context of the religious climate of the time, marked by the growing importance of the ideal of poverty preached by the Franciscans, and by the supportive apocalyptic speculations of Joachim of Fiore. Pope Innocent III was prophesying the imminent end of Islam because in the Book of Revelation the number of the beast was 666, and this was the number of years that had passed since the coming of Muḥammad.<sup>103</sup>

The arrival of the Mongols at the gates of Europe reactivated these eschatological expectations. In a letter sent by Emperor Frederick II to the king of England in 1241, and which Matthew Paris has kept, the Mongols are depicted as the instruments of God: they are charged with “purifying” the Christians of their sins.<sup>104</sup> Simon of St Quentin is convinced that Genghis Khan defeated

101 See commentary of this passage by Igor de Rachewilz, *The Secret History of the Mongols* 11:869–878.

102 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 408.

103 Devin DeWeese, “The Influence of the Mongols on the Religious Consciousness of Thirteenth Century Europe,” *Mongolian Studies* 5 (1978–1979): 43–44.

104 Matthew Paris, *Chronica majora* IV:112.

Prester John because the latter's people were Nestorians and thus heretics. Little by little, by means of the formation, in two phases, of a new legendary structure around the figure of Prester John, the Mongols were integrated into the medieval eschatological dream. The first development reverses the figures of Prester John and Genghis Khan: the mighty Christian king of the Indies, who had defeated Sanjar, is transformed into a heretic as vile as a Saracen, while Genghis Khan, who when the Mongol hordes were attacking Europe had been seen as the scourge of Christendom, now boasts the knightly virtues. In the second phase, the figure of Genghis Khan is "Christianized," and the expansion of his power thus has divine support. The Mongol prince's people are converted to the Christian faith after Prester John's defeat by the "men in religious habit" who were spared by the Great Khan to become new apostles. Genghis Khan is transformed into a hero and saviour, a "new Moses" who leads his people to the conquest of the Muslim territories.

Prester John, as a Christian king, cannot to be found in the Islamic sources, but similar ideas can be observed. The Muslims, like the Christians, wondered about the origins of these hitherto unknown peoples. Naturally, they resorted to scripture. Islamic exegesis too looked at the biblical eschatological traditions of Gog and Magog. These appear in the Qur'an as the peoples who will spread across the Earth on the day God opens the gate of the mountain behind which Dhū l-Qarnayn had confined them in.<sup>105</sup> The Mongols who had suddenly poured forth from behind the mountains of the Far East were quickly identified with the peoples of Gog and Magog.

The historical basis that gave birth to the legend of Prester John was, as we have said, the defeat of Sanjar in 1141 by the founder of the Qara Khitai dynasty. Almost a century later, the latter would be depicted as a "wall of strength" defending the Islamic territories against the Mongols.<sup>106</sup> After the conquest of the Qara Khitai lands by 'Alā al-Dīn Muḥammad in 1210–12, the Muslim population of a suburb of Nishapur in Iran was celebrating joyfully, but a descendant of the Prophet said:

O men of little heed, beyond this Turks (*turkān*) are a people stubborn in their vengeance and fury and exceeding Gog and Magog in the multitude of their numbers. And the people of Khitai (*qawm-i khitāy*) were in truth the wall of Dhū l-Qarnayn between us and them. And it is unlikely, when that wall is gone, that there will be any peace within this realm or that

105 Qur'an 18:83–99.

106 Michal Biran, "Like a Mighty Wall."

any man will recline in comfort and enjoyment. To-day I am in mourning for Islam.<sup>107</sup>

The warning sounded by this descendant of Muḥammad was prescient, for several years later almost all the great cities of Transoxiana and Khurasan were wiped out by the armies of Genghis Khan. To the Muslim mind, as to the Christian mind, time therefore stood still at the moment of the opening of the gates of Gog and Magog.

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107 Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā* 11:79–80; Juwaynī/Boyle 1:347.



## The Historiographical Works of Barhebraeus on the Mongol Period

Historical writing in Syriac conforms to the model of the universal histories, among which the history of Eusebius of Caesarea is a key link in a chain of compositions. Conversion to Christianity meant discovering a history that began with Adam and Eve and continued right up to contemporary events. History is therefore written with connection to salvation. The Syriac historiographers shared this way of thinking.<sup>1</sup> In the Syriac language, chronicles are referred to by the periphrasis “*makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē*,” meaning writing, recording of the times, chronography.<sup>2</sup> This way of seeing events gave rise to a historiographical tradition in which each author presents his work as the latest installment of a work in progress, in line with the scheme of divine providence.

We must acknowledge that at the time of Barhebraeus, Syriac literature was in a phase of decline. In the thirteenth century, its scientific and cultural models were those that had been established by Muslim authors, rather than by Christians as it had been the case in the early centuries of Islam. In the preface to his *Candelabra of the sanctuaries*, Barhebraeus draws a gloomy picture of his times:

When our age, in just such a way, creates madmen, I am obliged to compare it to animals, and to poetically call it by their names, saying, “O age, thou art blind as a mole and prickly as a hedgehog; thy sage resembles an ass and thy architect is an owl [...]” I considered it indispensable to bring together the necessary questions in an encyclopaedic work, therein to philosophically consider and develop the theological disciplines along with those devoted to nature.<sup>3</sup>

1 On Eusebius of Caesarea and Syriac historiography, see Muriel Debié, “L’héritage de la chronique d’Eusèbe dans l’historiographie syriaque,” *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 6 (2006): 18–28.

2 On the concept of time in the Syriac chronicles, see Muriel Debié, “Temps linéaire, temps circulaire: chronologie et histoire dans les chroniques syriaques,” in *Proche-Orient ancien. Temps vécu, temps pensé*, eds. F. Briquel-Chatonnet and H. Lozachmeur (Paris, 1998), 177–196.

3 Grégoire Aboulfaradj dit Barhebraeus, *Le Candélabre des sanctuaires*, ed. and trans. J. Bakoš, *Patrologia orientalis*, t. XXII, fasc. 4 (Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1930), 512–513.

This pessimistic view of his age was his reason for seeking to preserve Syriac literary production. He combined all aspects thereof in a series of works which constitute a veritable compendium of the knowledge of his day. Barhebraeus observes that the Syriac Christians, who, during the “golden age of Islam,” had brought knowledge and wisdom to the Arabs through the translation of ancient works, now sought knowledge and wisdom from Muslim scholars. Given the cultural situation of his time, it is not surprising that in the field of philosophy and the sciences, Barhebraeus turned to Muslim scholars. Thus, he completed a Syriac translation of Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt*, a text that was studied in the philosophical circles of Marāgha in Azerbaijan, with the commentaries of the Ismā‘īlī scholar Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and a translation of the medical treatise, *Qānūn al-ṭibb*.<sup>4</sup> Barhebraeus’ familiarity with Islamic sources and Islamic culture, insofar as we can assess it by analyzing his works, is remarkable for a Christian writer. He displays a great openness to the thought of the Muslim scholars; as Herman Teule has shown, he was greatly influenced by Islamic mysticism, especially al-Ghazālī’s (d. 1111) famous work *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*,<sup>5</sup> but also by other writers such as Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, a large part of whose *Akhḫāq-i Nāṣirī* he integrated into his monumental *Cream of Science* (*Ḥewāt ḥekmtā*).<sup>6</sup>

Barhebraeus is a prolific author in many domains. What are the elements of originality in his works? His historical works mark the end point of Syriac historiography: the last great texts drawn up before his are those of Michael the Syrian (d. 1199)<sup>7</sup> and the anonymous chronicle of 1234.<sup>8</sup> My aim here is to

4 Hermann Teule, “The Transmission of Islamic Culture to the World of Syriac Christianity: Barhebraeus’ Translation of Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt*. First Soundings,” in *Redefining Christian Identity. Cultural Interaction in the Middle East Since the Rise of Islam*, eds. J.J. Van Ginkel, H.L. Murre-Van Den Berg and T.M. Van Lint (Leuven: Peeters, 2005), 167–184.

5 Hermann Teule, “Al-Ghazali et Bar ‘Ebroyo. Spiritualités comparées,” in *Actes du colloque VII* (CEROI: Antélias, 2001), 213–226.

6 M. Zonta, “Structure and Sources of Bar-Hebraeus’ Practical Philosophy in *Cream of Science*,” in *Symposium syriacum III, Orientalia Christina Analecta* (1998): 279–292.

7 *Chronique de Michel le Syrien. Patriarche jacobite d’Antioche (1166–1199)*, ed. and trans. J.-B. Chabot, 4 vols. (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1899–1910). On this text, see Dorothea Weltecke, “The World Chronicle by Patriarch Michael the Great (1126–1199): Some Reflections,” *Journal of Assyrian Academic Studies* 12/2 (1997): 6–30; “Originality and Function of Formal Structures in the Chronicle of Michael the Great,” *Hugoye Journal of Syriac Studies* 3/2 (2000). Available on-line at: <http://syrocom.cua.edu/Hugoye/index.html>; *Die “Beschreibung der Zeiten” von Mōr Michael dem Grossen (1126–1199). Eine Studie zu ihrem historischen und historiographiegeschichtlichen Kontext* (Leuven: Peeters, 2003).

8 *Anonymi auctoris Chronicon ad annum Christi 1234 pertinens*, Part. 1, ed. J.-B. Chabot, (Paris, 1920, CSCO. Scriptores Syri. Series tertia, tomus 14); *Anonymi Auctoris Chronicon ad annum*

concentrate on his historiographical works in Syriac and Arabic, with regard to the information that can be derived from these for the history of the Mongols, and, above all, since he was a direct witness, on the Ilkhans, as well as on the Christian communities of the time. To what extent does he provide new information beyond what is found in the Eastern Christian and the Islamic sources? Or to put the question differently, who are the Christian and Muslim writers on whom he relied? The question is not easy to answer for the period under consideration. For the period of the Crusades, by contrast, he is no innovator in his Arabic chronicle: he merely copies, almost verbatim, from the Arabic sources, in particular Ibn al-Athīr's *al-Kāmil fī l-ta'rikh*.<sup>9</sup>

### Barhebraeus and his Historical Works

Barhebraeus is the author of two chronicles of dissimilar length. The first of these is a Syriac universal history in two parts. Barhebraeus wrote a secular history, *Makt<sup>o</sup>bonout zabnē*,<sup>10</sup> known as the *Chronicon Syriacum*,<sup>11</sup> the last two chapters of which were published in Arabic translation with the title *Ta'rikh al-zamān* on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of his death.<sup>12</sup> This was in fact the publication in book form of a translation that Fr. Iṣḥāq Armaleh had published in the review *al-Machriq* between 1949 and 1956. The second part of this chronicle is an ecclesiastical history (*Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*);<sup>13</sup> an abridged Arabic version of this, too, was published in 1923–24.<sup>14</sup> These translations, carried out in the first half of the twentieth century, attest to the fame of Barhebraeus' historical works which were vectors of intercultural transmis-

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*Christi 1234 pertinens*, Part. II, trans. in Latin by A. Abouna with notes by J.-M. Fiey (Leuven: Peeters, 1974, CSCO. Scriptorum Syri, tomus 154).

- 9 Hermann Teule, "Bar Hebraeus' Syriac & Arabic Seculars Chronicles," in *East & West in the Crusader States*, eds. K.N. Ciggaar, A. Davids and H. Teule (Leuven: Peeters, 1966), 38–49; Françoise Micheau, "Le *Kāmil* d'Ibn al-Athīr, source principale de l'Histoire des Arabes dans le *Mukhtasar* de Bar Hebraeus," *Mélanges de l'Université Saint-Joseph* 68 (2005): 425–439.
- 10 *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Syriacum*, ed. P. Bedjan (Paris-Leipzig, 1890).
- 11 Ernest A. Wallis Budge, *The Chronography of Gregory Abū'l-Faraj (1225–1286)*, 2 vols. (Amsterdam: Apa-Philo Press, 1976), I: XIV–XXXVI.
- 12 Abū al-Faraj Jamāl al-Dīn Ibn al-'Ibrī [Barhebraeus], *Ta'rikh al-zamān* (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1986).
- 13 *Gregorii Barhebraei Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, ed. and trans. in Latin J.B. Abbeloos and Th. Lamy, 3 vols. (Paris-Leuven, 1872–1877).
- 14 *Al-Machriq* 21 (1923): 494–507, 660–671; 22 (1924): 182–192, 272–281, 364–372, 417–427, 519–527, 604–614.

sion. They are also a sign that the largely Arabized Christians were no longer able to read the Syriac original. Nevertheless, these works relating the history of their community had left their mark in the collective social memory. As one may observe, Barhebraeus, although a successor to Michael the Syrian, clearly follows the model of Eusebius of Caesarea. He divides “secular history” and “ecclesiastical history” into two separate volumes. He is also the author of an Arabic chronicle entitled *Mukhtaṣar taʿrīkh al-duwal*, which became known in the West at a very early date thanks to the extracts published by Edward Pocke in Oxford in 1650.<sup>15</sup>

It was long considered that the *Mukhtaṣar* was a summary of *Maktʿebonout zabnē*.<sup>16</sup> This claim is based on the evidence of Bar Ṣawma, the brother of Barhebraeus, in the long obituary that he dedicates to the latter in the ecclesiastical history, describing his final moments in Marāgha.<sup>17</sup> But Bar Ṣawma does not say that his brother summarized it:

The most respected among the Arabs appealed to him to translate the chronicle that he had written in Syriac into the Saracen tongue that they might read it and have the benefit thereof [...]. In one month, he all but completed it, leaving only three folios.<sup>18</sup>

If this Arabic chronicle was indeed composed on the motion of his Muslim friends, it was probably begun before the last year that he spent in Marāgha prior to his death in 1286. The hagiographic nature of Bar Ṣawma’s obituary could explain why he claims that his brother composed the *Mukhtaṣar* within just one month. The account of Barhebraeus’ last days is entirely in line with the model of hagiographic literature. The death of a holy man is always a special moment for the hagiographer. It marks the coming to fruition of a holy life. In Christianity, the day a saint dies is the most important day of his life, for it is the day he is born in heaven (*dies natalis*): he enjoys immediate beatitude.<sup>19</sup> At the moment of death, all founders choose to leave this world calmly and in the

15 *Specimen historiae Arabum*, reprint by J. White in 1806. Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *Taʿrīkh mukhtaṣar al-duwal*, ed. A. Ṣāliḥānī (Beirut: Imprimerie catholique, 1890). On the title, see Samir Khalil, “Trois manuscrits de la chronique arabe de Bar Hébraeus à Istanbul,” *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 46 (1980): 213–217.

16 On this question, see Denise Aigle, “Bar Hebraeus et son public,” *Le Muséon* 118/1–2 (2005): 90–92.

17 After his brother’s death, Bar Ṣawma continued writing both parts of the Syriac chronicle.

18 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* 111:469 (Syriac); 470 (Latin).

19 Marc Van Uytenghe, “L’essor du culte des saints et la question de l’eschatologie,” in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (III<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup> s.)* (Rome: École française de Rome, 1991), 91–107.

cenobitic mode in order to perpetuate their work. Ill and aware that his final hour was approaching, Barhebraeus offered his advice “without fear of death, contrary to all men.”<sup>20</sup> He began to make his recommendations to his disciples, saying, “Remain in my love<sup>21</sup> [...] every time that you are gathered together in love, I will be among you.”<sup>22</sup> The disciples tore their clothes and threw dust on their heads.<sup>23</sup>

When Barhebraeus set about composing *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē*, in 1276, he clearly wanted to follow in the footsteps of Michael the Syrian and add his own contribution to Syriac historiography by writing a universal history on a large scale.<sup>24</sup> But he displays a different goal in the preface to the *Mukhtaṣar*. There he sets out his principle of “selection” from the actions of rulers and wise men, and from good things and bad:<sup>25</sup> he selects certain stories to turn them into a different book. This selective approach towards the facts may explain the title of the book. In his introduction to *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē*, Barhebraeus says that he has made use of the resources of the Ilkhans’ library at Marāgha, where, he says, he found Syriac, Arabic and Persian manuscripts, as well as the archival documents that were kept there. For contemporary events, he claims to have relied on his own testimony. In addition, in the biographical entry dedicated to Shams al-Dīn al-Juwaynī, executed on 4 Sha‘bān 683/16 October 1284, he writes that the *Tārīkh-i jahāngushā* of the latter’s brother, ‘Aṭā’ Malik al-Juwaynī, was his main source.

Both the Syriac and the Arabic chronicles provide information concerning the Muslims in their penultimate chapters on “The Kings of the Arabs” (Syr. *ṭayāyē*) and their final chapters on “The Kings of the Mongols.”<sup>26</sup> In both chron-

20 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* III:471 (Syriac); 472 (Latin).

21 Jn 15, 9.

22 Matthew 18, 20, with a small variation: “Wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there amongst you.” Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* III:473 (Syriac); 474 (Latin).

23 On death of founders in Christianity, see for example Jacques Dalarun, “La mort des saints fondateurs. De Martin à François,” in *Les fonctions des saints dans le monde occidental (III<sup>e</sup>–XIII<sup>e</sup>)*, 193–215, and in Islam Denise Aigle, “Sainteté et miracles. Deux saints fondateurs en Iran méridional (XI<sup>e</sup> et XIV<sup>e</sup> s.),” *Oriente moderno* 93 (2013): 79–100.

24 His presentation, however, departs from this model, as unlike Michael the Syrian, he does not combine secular and ecclesiastical history in one volume.

25 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 1.

26 It must be underlined that Barhebraeus does not use the same term for the Mongols in his two chronicles. In Arabic he uses the term *mughūl*, whereas in the Syriac version he terms them Huns (*hunāniyē*), in line with the Christian view that these conquerors who had emerged from the steppe were the peoples of Gog and Magog of biblical eschatology.

icles, the part devoted to the “Kings of the Arabs” ends with the account of Hülegü’s conquest of Baghdad, an event which in the historian’s mind marked the transition to a new era, that of the advent of the Mongols. Barhebraeus’ proximity to the Ilkhans and the Persian staff of the bureaucracy confers a particular interest on his historiographical work, being both a witness to history as it unfolds and an actor therein given his position as Maphrien, prelate of the Syriac Orthodox Church.<sup>27</sup>

### The Selection of Events

The historian’s task is to collect accounts and integrate them chronologically into a linear ensemble. He thus makes choices among the written and oral sources that he uses and among the events that he himself has witnessed. A comparison of the succession of events related in the last chapter of the Syriac and Arabic versions of the secular chronicle is enlightening in this regard.<sup>28</sup>

The first observation that occurs to one when comparing the events given in the two texts is that they are not always related in the same order. The Arabic version is much closer to chronological order, but, for greater clarity, I have classed them in the table in the order of the Syriac chronicle since the latter contains much information absent from the *Mukhtaṣar*. All information about the Christians has disappeared completely from the Arabic version of the chronicle, not just that concerning the internal affairs of the various Christian communities, but also information on what is in store for them when cities are besieged and captured.

Barhebraeus’ personal commentaries on certain events are omitted from the *Mukhtaṣar*. A case in point is the death of Baybars. In the Arabic text, he gives a very straightforward account of this,<sup>29</sup> while in the Syriac version, he comments on the event as follows:

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27 On Ilkhans and Barhebraeus, see George Lane, “An Account of Gregory Bar Hebraeus Abu al-Faraj and His Relations with the Mongols of Persia,” *Hugoye Journal of Syriac Studies* 2/2 (1999). Available on-line at <http://syrocom.cua.edu/Hugoye/index.html>.

28 See Appendix 1, which gives only a selection of the events included in the two chronicles. Neither is the part of the Syriac chronicle composed by Barhebraeus’ brother after his death included.

29 Some hold that the cause of his death was an arrow that wounded him during combat against the Tatars and remained for long stuck in his thigh, while others say that he was poisoned, see [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 288.

The divine decree struck him and he ended his days on the 28th Muḥarram 676/1st July 1277. His plans, so laden with menace, were reduced to naught. He boasted and said like Pharaoh of old, “The Nile is mine, it is I who made it.”<sup>30</sup>

He illustrates his commentary with a biblical quotation, taken from Ezechiel.<sup>31</sup> The comparison between Pharaoh and Baybars, then sultan of Egypt, enables Barhebraeus to explain to the Christian communities that God had thus taken vengeance on the Egyptian armies that had inflicted heavy losses upon them, especially during their raids against the Franks and Cilicia, but also against certain native Christian of Syria. Barhebraeus uses the parallel between the Egyptian Pharaoh and Baybars in the form of an *exemplum*. What happens in the present has justification in the past. This *exemplum* seeks to teach the historical causality that strikes Christian communities, but which is compensated for by divine providence in their favor. Present history is thus seen as an extension of sacred history.

The *Mukhtaṣar* contains supplementary details on a number of iconic political events. It also gives various exchanges of diplomatic correspondence, including a letter addressed by Hülegü to the last Ayyubid prince of Aleppo and Damascus, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, which, although it is a “copy,” is the closest document we have to the original. Barhebraeus probably copied it in the library of Marāgha.<sup>32</sup> He also preserves two letters exchanged between Tegüder Aḥmad (r. 680–83/1282–84), the first Ilkhan to have converted to Islam,<sup>33</sup> and the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwūn (r. 679–89/1280–90).<sup>34</sup> These copies of diplomatic letters included in the *Mukhtaṣar* are the oldest documents relating this correspondence. Tegüder Aḥmad’s stated aim was to make peace with the rival power that the Mamluk sultanate represented. In reality, this peace proposal was an implicit demand for submission. Barhebraeus, in his Syriac chronicle, gives a short summary of the end of the Ilkhan’s letter:

30 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 538.

31 Ez 29, 3: “Speak, and say: Thus say the Lord God: Behold, I come against thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt,” Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 538.

32 On this letter, see chapter 9.

33 Reuven Amitai, “The Conversion of Tegüder Ilkhan to Islam,” *JSAI* 25 (2001): 15–43.

34 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 289–292: Tegüder Aḥmad’s letter; 292–296: reply al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn.

In line with God's commandment and with the law that our father Genghis Khan laid down, destiny<sup>35</sup> has entrusted me with kingship over the Mongols [...]. I desire that fighting, warfare and pillage cease [...]. If you are of like mind, support the cause of peace and submission. If you persist in your rebellion, God will hold you to account for the blood that will then be spilled by the oppressed.<sup>36</sup>

In this summary of the Arabic version of the letter, Barhebraeus has suppressed the Qur'anic quotes that were intended to illustrate and justify on religious terms this implicit demand for submission. It may be that he judged it useful to convey the end of this letter in his Syriac chronicle so as to inform the Syriac communities that, although converted to Islam, Tegüder Aḥmad had retained the traditional Mongol political line, albeit in an Islamic cloak.

In *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē*, the biographical entries reflect the author's judgement concerning the person in question, and are less stereotypical than in the *Mukhtaṣar*. I will give but one very indicative example. In his Arabic chronicle, Barhebraeus mentions in a mere three lines the death of Hülegü and his wife Doquz Khatun. He describes Hülegü as a magnanimous ruler who surrounded himself with wise men (*al-ḥukamā'*) and scholars of the religious sciences (*al-ʿulamā'*).<sup>37</sup> He then writes that after the death of the Ilkhan, his wife too died. He describes her as a woman endowed with great knowledge (*al-khibra*) and fine judgement (*al-rāy*).<sup>38</sup> This short biographical notice is, indeed, positive, but Barhebraeus does not give any very personal opinion. The entry follows the Islamic model. By contrast, in his Syriac chronicle, he dedicates a longer entry to Hülegü and his wife, in which we find the author's positive judgement, but with additions that reflect the view that the eastern Christians had of the royal couple. He comments thus on their deaths:

In the Greek year 1576, the year 1256 of our era, in early June, the King of Kings Hulaku [Hülegü] departed this world. He had no equal for wisdom, magnanimity, or the excellence of his rule. In the summer, Tokuz Khatun

35 Here destiny is an allusion to the mandate of Eternal Heaven.

36 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 548.

37 In Islamic sources, Hülegü is also described as surrounded by wise men. Rashīd al-Dīn wrote: "His court [of Hülegü] was adorned by the presence of scholars and wise men (*ʿulamā' wa ḥukamā'*)," see Rashīd al-Dīn/Alizade, 111:91. See Reuven Amitai, "Hülegü and his Wise men: topos or Reality," in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th–15th Century Tabriz*, 15–34.

38 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 284–285.



[Doquz Khatun] too, the most faithful queen, departed. The death of these two stars that had brought triumph to the religion of the Messiah caused great affliction among the Christians.<sup>39</sup>

After the trauma provoked by the Mongol conquests in Anatolia, Armenia and northern Syria, the Armenian and Georgian principalities submitted to the Mongols and became their allies. The Armenian elite made numerous attempts to promote an image of Mongol rulers as friends of the Christians.<sup>40</sup> Identical opinions to those of Barhebraeus can be found in the Armenian historians. Vardan Arevelc'i (1200–71) writes:

Houlagou [Hülegü]'s wife, named Dôkhouz-Khathoun [Doquz Khatun], was in fact a Christian [...]. She held the Christians in sincere affection and in particular regard [...]. The same went for Houlagou [...]. The Tartars carried with them a canvas tent in the shape of a church. The *jamahar* (rattle) would call the faithful to prayer.<sup>41</sup>

An emblematic text for the tendency to reappraise the Mongols in positive terms at the end of the 13th century is the *History of the Region of Sisakan* by Step'anos Örbëlean (1260?–1304).<sup>42</sup> We also have many accounts indicating that the Christians considered Hülegü and Doquz Khatun as the “Constantine and Helen” of the age. He writes:

The great and pious sovereign, master of the world, hope and providence of the Christians, Houlavou-Ghan [Hülegü] died [...] along with his most blessed wife Toghouz-Khatun [Doquz Khatun], poisoned by the guileful Khoja-Sahib [Shams al-Dīn al-Juwaynī]. God alone knows if they were inferior in piety to Constantine and Helen.<sup>43</sup>

39 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 521.

40 See Alexander Osipian, “Baptised Mongol Rulers, Prester John and the Magi: Armenian Image of the Mongols Produced for the Westerns Readers in the Mid-Thirteenth–Early Fourteenth Centuries,” in *Caucasus During the Mongol Period—Der Kaukasus in der Mongolenzeit*, eds. Jürgen Tubach, Sophia G. Vashalomidze and Manfred Zimmer (Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2012), 153–167. See also Zaroui Pogossian, “Armenians, Mongols and the End of Times: An Overview of 13th Century Sources,” in *Caucasus During the Mongol Period*, 169–198.

41 Vardan Arevelc'i, “Les Mongols d'après les historiens arméniens,” *JA* (1860): 290.

42 He personally knew three Ilkhans: Arghun, Geikhetü, and Gazan Khan.

43 [Step'anos Örbëlean], *Histoire de la Siounie*, trans. M. Brosset (Saint-Petersbourg, 1864), 234–235.

Barhebraeus' account matches that of Armenian historian Vardan Arevelc'i in whom he may have found inspiration. But did he understand Armenian? Dioscorus of Gazarta wrote a biography in which he claimed that this great scholar had some knowledge of Armenian.<sup>44</sup> However, when he was ordained in Sīs, the capital of Cilicia, his sermon had to be translated into Armenian.<sup>45</sup> Barhebraeus often, in speaking of the authorities on which he relies, uses imprecise terms, such as *malfōnō* or indeed "one of my brothers."<sup>46</sup> The hypothesis may therefore be put forward that he may in some cases have used Armenian oral accounts that were transmitted to him through Syriac. In his *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum*, he writes that certain monks (*dayrōyē*) of the monastery of Mār Mattai understood Armenian.<sup>47</sup> Thus, in choosing and selecting the accounts that he considered worthy to engage the interest of his readers, Barhebraeus composed two different chronicles, even if most of the chronological and political information remains fundamentally identical in the Syriac and Arabic texts.

### Barhebraeus and the Use of Sources

The main information on the Mongols, appearing in the second-last chapter of both texts, concerns their geographical origins, their situation before Genghis Khan, the coming to power of the latter on the steppe, an account of their various conquests, a description of Mongol law,<sup>48</sup> their cultural relations with other tribes, and, finally, an account of the Great Khan's death. All this information is scattered throughout the narrative of events that occurred in Anatolia, Syria, and Egypt, which have themselves no direct relation with the Mongols. Barhebraeus, as we have seen above, asserts in *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē* that his main source is al-Juwaynī's chronicle, composed between 1252 and 1260. That chronicle recounts the conquests and reign of Genghis Khan and the Great Khans who succeeded him up to Möngke, as well as Hülegü's progress in the lands of Islam. But, although the text was completed after the capture of Baghdad, al-Juwaynī makes no mention of its fall. Having studied the Persian chronicle and Barhebraeus' Syriac text, I can ascertain that the latter

44 Hermann Teule, "Gregory Barhebraeus and his Time: The Syrian Renaissance," *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 3 (2003): 22.

45 Hermann Teule, "Gregory Barhebraeus and his Time," 38, n. 16.

46 Hermann Teule, "Gregory Barhebraeus and his Time," 21.

47 Hermann Teule, "Gregory Barhebraeus and his Time," 38–39, n. 16.

48 On the Mongol law, see chapter 7.

had direct access to the Persian text and translated fragments of it into Syriac for use in the second-last chapter of his chronicle's secular history.

Pier Giorgio Borbone has very clearly shown that in *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē*, Barhebraeus relies on al-Juwaynī for events to which he was not a direct witness.<sup>49</sup> But I thought it of interest to study how he used this source and to ask whether he also used al-Juwaynī in composing his Arabic chronicle. As a first step, I compared the organization of information in *Ta'riḫ-i jahāngushā* and in *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē*. I was thus able to see that he delves into al-Juwaynī, taking much information from him, sometimes with mistakes as to the names of tribes and of places. But an interesting fact, not noted by Pier Giorgio Borbone, is that he provides new information. I have also observed that al-Juwaynī is probably one of the sources used by Barhebraeus for a great deal of the information on the Mongols included in the second-last chapter of *Mukhtaṣar*. I have selected a number of relevant examples of the way Barhebraeus uses *Ta'riḫ-i jahāngushā*.<sup>50</sup>

His account of the history of the Mongols before Genghis Khan is certainly based on the oral sources collected by al-Juwaynī during his stay in Qaraqorum, which was long before Hülegü's arrival in Persian territory.<sup>51</sup> The second account retraces Genghis Khan's rise to power on the steppe. In *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē*, Barhebraeus writes that: "Ong Khan, who was John, king of the Christians, reigned over a tribe of barbarian Huns who were called Krīt."<sup>52</sup> Ong Khan thus appears, correctly, as king of the Kerait. I will not enter into the detail of the complicated events surrounding the elimination of the king of the Kerait. But, departing on this occasion from al-Juwaynī and relying probably on an account circulating on the steppe which had acquired the status of legend, Barhebraeus confuses Ong Khan with Küchlüg, the son of the Naiman' leader, who had indeed married the daughter of the Buddhist king of the Qara Khitai of Transoxiana.<sup>53</sup> This passage concerning Ong Khan is absent from al-Juwaynī, who for his part does not confuse Ong Khan with Küchlüg. Barhebraeus has inserted this into his account of the rise to power of Genghis Khan probably on the basis of oral sources of Nestorian origin.

49 For a comparison between the Syriac version of the chronicle and these of 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juwaynī, see Pier Giorgio Borbone, "Barhebraeus e Juwaynī: Un cronista siro et la sua fonte Persiana," *Evo* 27 (2004): 121–144.

50 See Appendix 2.

51 Similar accounts were produced by John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruc, both of whom also stayed in the Mongol capital.

52 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 409.

53 On this passage concerning Ong Khan and King John in Barhebraeus, see chapter 2.

This legend was still in circulation at the time of Barhebraeus, who was in contact not only with Jacobite Christians, but also with Nestorians, the latter being many and influential at the Ilkhanid court. In other words, Barhebraeus “reworks” al-Juwaynī’s material. It is of particular interest that he includes the King John episode in *Mukhtaṣar*, while omitting all the Biblical quotes justifying Genghis Khan’s victory. This is a clue that may support the theory that the Arabic text was intended for a Muslim readership, as Barhebraeus’ brother asserts.

Another passage that is useful in demonstrating how Barhebraeus makes use of al-Juwaynī, by contrast, follows the latter’s Persian text closely. It is the episode concerning the role played by Teb Tenggeri in Genghis Khan’s election. As reported by al-Juwaynī, this account reflects the ideology of his successors who claimed a mandate from Heaven to conquer the world. It is transmitted, almost verbatim, by Barhebraeus in his Syriac and Arabic chronicles,<sup>54</sup> providing further evidence that Barhebraeus has adopted the *Ta’rīkh-i jahāngushā* of al-Juwaynī, along with oral sources, as his main source for everything concerning Genghis Khan.

It is relatively easy to understand how Barhebraeus “worked” on the facts supplied by al-Juwaynī: he makes selections and reorganizes the information by summarizing it and adding the oral accounts that were in circulation in Christian circles. The question of the sources used by Barhebraeus in drafting the final chapter of his chronicles is somewhat more difficult to answer. Has he used Christian or Islamic oral sources? Does he scrupulously follow one or more Arabic sources, as he does for the periods of which he was not a personal witness?

I have consulted a number of the Arabic sources in which Barhebraeus could have acquired his information. Abū Shamā (d. 655/1268) is the author of a history of some importance, in particular for the Ayyubids, *Kitāb al-Rawḍatayn fī akhbār al-dawlatayn al-Ṣalāḥiyya wa-l-Nūrīyya*, which he completed in 659/1261. This text pays no heed to the Mongols, but Barhebraeus could have made use of its sequel (*Dhayl ‘alā l-rawḍatayn*), also the work of Abū Shamā who continued working on it until his death. As Nikita Éliasséeff points out, from 625/1228 on he uses his personal notes.<sup>55</sup> His information on Bilād al-Shām is first-hand. He was witness to Hülegü’s attacks on Syria, but once again we do not find any passages copied word for word. The chronicle of al-Makīn b. al-‘Amīd (d. 672/1273), a Coptic author born in Egypt but living in Damascus,

54 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 409; [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-‘Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 226–227.

55 Nikita Elisséeff, *Nūr al-Dīn. Un grand prince musulman de Syrie au temps des Croisades (511–569H/1118–1174)*, 2 vols. (Damascus: Institut français de Damas, 1967) 1:53.

then raised my expectations.<sup>56</sup> This author appears to have met Barhebraeus in 652/1254.<sup>57</sup> A witness to the Mongol conquest of Syria, Ibn al-ʿAmīd negotiated with Hülegü, which earned him a long period of imprisonment.<sup>58</sup> He is the author of a universal history, *Nahj al-sadīd wa-l-durr al-farīd*.<sup>59</sup> I compared *Mukhtaṣar* to the part of this chronicle edited by Claude Cahen, but unfortunately, this path led to nowhere. For example, as with Barhebraeus we find accounts of the Mongol invasion of Anatolia, of the capture of Baghdad, and of the capture of Mayyāfāriqin and Aleppo. But while they have the same tone as those in *Mukhtaṣar*, they are not identical in their formulations, whereas when Barhebraeus uses Ibn al-Athīr's *Kāmil fī l-taʾrīkh*, he copies it almost word for word.

For the moment, we do not know which Arabic sources Barhebraeus used. But having observed the way Barhebraeus used ʿAṭāʾ Malik al-Juwaynī, it is possible that he delved into various Arabic sources and “reworked” their text, which would explain why it has been difficult to find one basic source. He may have used a source that has disappeared, one that is preserved in a later text, or simply one that has not yet been published. For the last chapter of his chronicles, it is difficult to say in which Arabic sources he may have found his information, but for many of the events that he relates, he relies on his own experience and on information that he was able to collect orally.

### What Value Should be Attached to Barhebraeus' Chronicles for the Mongol Period?

Several Muslim authors have relied on his Arabic chronicle, as Claude Cahen has shown in the case of Ibn Shaddād's history of the Jazīra.<sup>60</sup> Mamluk and Persian historians who have passed on the diplomatic correspondence used the *Mukhtaṣar*. These letters confer a high degree of importance on the chronicle, as Barhebraeus gives us their oldest versions. He seems to have had access

56 The part of the chronicle corresponding to the period under consideration in this article has been published by Claude Cahen, “La ‘Chronique des Ayyoubides’ d'al-Makīn b. al-ʿAmīd,” *BEO* 15 (1955–57): 127–184.

57 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Ecclesiasticum* III:719 (Syriac text); 720 (Latin).

58 Claude Cahen, “La Chronique des Ayyoubides,” 112.

59 On this author, see Nikita Éliasséeff, *Un grand prince musulman de Syrie au temps des Croisades*, 55, and Claude Cahen, “La Chronique des Ayyoubides,” 109–115.

60 Claude Cahen, “La Djazira au milieu du treizième siècle d'après ʿIzz-ad din ibn Chaddad,” *Revue des études islamiques* 1 (1934): 116–128.

to originals, or at least to copies of the originals held by the Ilkhanid chancellery. These letters have come down to us with numerous variations.

The Syriac chronicle includes information on the internal political affairs of the Ilkhans and on the Christian communities which is not to be found in *Mukhtaṣar*, making it a source of indisputable interest. These two texts complete each other perfectly. For the second-last chapter, however, one cannot say that he provides any new information compared to al-Juwaynī, other than oral legendary sources which are of interest for the history of representations and for a study of how Barhebraeus used on his sources.

In addition to the value of the chronicles for the history of the Mongols, *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē* is of interest for the history of the Christian communities, in particular the Syriacs, Armenians and Nestorians, who are, with few exceptions, conspicuously absent from Islamic sources. The way Barhebraeus composes his Syriac chronicle shows that this text is intended to teach the lessons of history to the Jacobite Christian community. As can be seen from the tables comparing *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē* and *Mukhtaṣar*, Barhebraeus, a direct witness to the events he catalogues in the last chapter of his Syriac chronicle, has composed, or so it appears to me, a community history. He details what happened in the bishoprics of which he had charge, and in the towns and villages where important Jacobite Christian communities lived. He details the eventful history of the monasteries and describes Christian festivals and the difficulties encountered in trying to celebrate them in peace. Everything that relates directly to the history of the Christians is part of a symbolic language. Barhebraeus seeks to demonstrate that, in the end, it is God who decides their fate. By offering new accounts of divine grace in worldly affairs, the historian is in fact extending sacred history.

One may also hypothesize that this Syriac chronicle, of which only two full manuscripts exist,<sup>61</sup> held in the Bodleian library in Oxford, one of them being a very large folio written in a bold hand in four columns,<sup>62</sup> may have been intended for a pedagogical purpose: the reading in church, or to the congregation, of the passages concerning the Christian communities. It was, indeed, as a history of their community that the Jacobite religious leaders perceived the *Makt<sup>e</sup>bonout zabnē*, which they continued up to 1493.<sup>63</sup>

61 Hunt n° 1 and Hunt n° 52, Barhebraeus/Budge, viii.

62 This is manuscript Hunt 1. It was copied in 1498 by a monk named Joseph. Manuscript Hunt 52 is older, and was probably copied in the fourteenth century, see Barhebraeus/Budge, viii.

63 Jean-Marie Fiey, "Esquisse d'une biographie de Bar Hébraeus (m. 1286)," *Parole de l'Orient* 13 (1986): 299.

Barhebraeus adapts his method of historical narrative to the cultural references of his intended readers. The Syriac chronicle is written in the tradition of Michael the Syrian, but with an emphasis, for the period whose events the writer himself witnessed, on their edifying, exemplary and didactic aspect, halfway between historiography and hagiography.<sup>64</sup> *Mukhtaṣar*, on the other hand, is inspired more by the Islamic model. It follows the chronological order of events more closely, the author makes no personal commentary, the obituaries are grouped together at the end of each year, and the biographical entries correspond more or less to the stereotyped model of Arabic biographical dictionaries.

How reliable is Barhebraeus for the history of the Mongols? In the end, the more thought I give to the use of medieval sources, the more cautious I become in using them. Now, when writing a history book or an article, I make choices when selecting the information I use from my sources, knowing at the same time that the historians I am using made choices themselves. Writing history means making choices, and we must therefore be conscious that we are creating an image of the society we attempt to reconstruct, in the image of the reconstruction previously carried out by the historiographers on whom we rely. It is also necessary to be aware that the historiographer adapts to the public for which he writes his texts. Chronicles are also destined to serve as works of propaganda on behalf of rulers, great families or a particular community. They are intended to preserve a “collective memory,” an “image” that one wishes to leave to future generations. Certainly, Barhebraeus like other medieval historians is reliable, as long as we pay heed to the way he uses his sources and decode the message that he wants to deliver.

## Appendix 1

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### *Maktʿbonout zabnē*

### *Mukhtaṣar taʾriḫ al-duwal*

After the death of the caliph, Hülegü appoints a governor in Baghdad: ‘Alī Bahādur [al-Khʿārizmī].

Long passage on the situation of the Christians and the fate awaiting them after an Arab slanders them to Hülegü.

After the death of the caliph, Hülegü appoints a *shihna* and *wulāt* in Baghdad (*they are not named*).

*Omitted from the Arabic text.*

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64 Denise Aigle, “Bar Hebraeus et son public,” 98–102.

*Makt'bonout zabnē**Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal*

Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' sends his son to Hülegü; he then comes to him in person. Siege of Mayyāfāriqīn (*some additional details*).

Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' sends his son to Hülegü; he then comes to him in person. Siege of Mayyāfāriqīn.

Hülegü asks al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ to pledge allegiance to him; he sends his son; several embassies asking him to come in person are mentioned.

Hülegü asks al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ to pledge allegiance to him; he sends his son.

*Omitted from the Syriac text.*

Text of a letter Hülegü addressed to al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ dated 657; the letter is carried by Mongol envoys.

Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ sends his son; Hülegü is angered; Hülegü is referred to by the Persian title *Shāhānshāh*.

Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ sends his son; Hülegü is angered; Hülegü is referred to by the Arabic title *Malik al-arḍ*.

Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ comes before Hülegü and swears allegiance to him.

Al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ comes before Hülegü and swears allegiance to him.

Hülegü asks the Rūm Saljuq sultans, 'Izz al-Dīn and his brother Rukn al-Dīn, to pledge allegiance to him; he then divides Anatolia between the two.

Hülegü asks the Rūm Saljuq sultans, 'Izz al-Dīn and his brother Rukn al-Dīn, to vow allegiance to him; he then divides Anatolia between the two.

Additional information on the visit of one of the sultans to a Christian monastery.

*Omitted from the Arabic version*

Siege and capture of Aleppo by Hülegü (*many details as to the fate of the Christians, who are also massacred*).

Siege and capture of Aleppo by Hülegü (*all information concerning the Christians is omitted*).

News of the fall of Mayyāfāriqīn (*many details as to the fate of the Christians*).

News of the fall of Mayyāfāriqīn (*all information concerning the Christians is omitted*).

Capture of Mārdīn due to the refusal of the lord of the town to submit.

Capture of Mārdīn due to the refusal of the lord of the town to submit.

Rabban Simeon places himself at Hülegü's service: the Christians prosper.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

Mongol defeat at 'Ayn Jālūt.

Mongol defeat at 'Ayn Jālūt.

Mongol reprisals against al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ: he is killed along with his entourage.

Mongol reprisals against al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ: he is killed along with his entourage (*more detailed than the Syriac version*).



(cont.)

<i>Makt'bonout zabnē</i>	<i>Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal</i>
Enthronement of the Great Khan Qubilai.	Enthronement of the Great Khan Qubilai.
Baybars takes power after killing the Mamluk sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz.	Baybars takes power after killing the Mamluk sultan of Egypt, al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz.
Return of the Mongols to Syria.	Return of the Mongols to Syria ( <i>additional details on the role played by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Yūnis</i> ).
Mosuli affairs: episode of the letter sent from Egypt to the city's [Christian] governor, plotting against the Mongols; reprisals of the Muslim troops against the Christians.	Mosuli affairs: episode of the letter sent from Egypt to the city's [Christian] governor, plotting against the Mongols ( <i>the considerable information about the Christians in the Syriac version is omitted</i> ).
Baybars sends a young black, of caliphal ancestry, to take Baghdad: he is defeated [this was the first Abbasid caliph of Cairo, placed on the throne by Baybars].	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Siege of Mosul by the Mongols.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Death of Hülegü and his wife Doquz Khatun ( <i>eulogy of the two "stars"</i> ).	Death of Hülegü and his wife Doquz Khatun ( <i>their death is recorded without any comment as to her having been Christian</i> ).
Enthronement of the Ilkhan Abaqa.	Enthronement of the Ilkhan Abaqa.
Marriage of Abaqa to the Byzantine emperor's daughter [Despina Khatun].	Marriage of Abaqa to the Byzantine emperor's daughter [Despina Khatun] ( <i>Barhebraeus' personal commentary is omitted</i> ).
Baybars demands that the king of Cilicia, Het'um I, submit to him and pay the poll tax; the latter asks for Mongol assistance; arrival of the Mamluk troops in Cilicia; Leon, the king's son, is taken prisoner ( <i>many details on the fate of the Armenian Christian populations</i> ).	Baybars demands that the king of Cilicia, Het'um I, submit to him and pay the poll tax; the latter asks for Mongol assistance; arrival of the Mamluk troops in Cilicia; Leon, the king's son, is taken prisoner ( <i>omission of the destruction of churches and convents</i> ).

*Makt'bonout zabnē**Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal*

Negotiations between Het'um I and Baybars for the release of Prince Leon in exchange for the emir Sunqur al-Ashqar [who had been taken prisoner by the Mongols]. The Mamluks invade Cilicia. Sunqur al-Ashqar is freed by Abaqa, who takes pity on King Het'um I.

Negotiations between Het'um I and Baybars for the release of Prince Leon in exchange for the emir Sunqur al-Ashqar [who had been taken prisoner by the Mongols]. The Mamluks invade Cilicia. Sunqur al-Ashqar is freed by Abaqa, who takes pity on King Het'um I (*additional details on the return of Prince Leon*).

Story of a man from Taghrīt who had converted to Islam and whom the Nestorian catholicos wished to drown in the Tigris.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

Capture of Antioch by Baybars.

Capture of Antioch by Baybars.

Execution of the bishop of Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

Earthquake in Cilicia.

Earthquake in Cilicia (*no reference to the destroyed churches and monasteries*).

Death of the king of Cilicia, Het'um I, and election of his son Leon.

Death of the king of Cilicia, Het'um I, and election of his son Leon.

The Ismā'īlī attack Shams al-Dīn al-Juwaynī, the head of the Baghdad *dīwān*: repression of the Christians.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

Some of the great men of Cilicia betray King Leon again.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

Earthquake in Azerbaijan.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

Story of a Nestorian monk who has sexual relations with a Muslim woman, and renounces Islam during Lent.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

Death of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī; his biography.

Death of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī; his biography (*structured differently and treated as a chapter, faṣl, in the chronicle*).

Story of the Jewish goldsmith murdered by criminals who sought to rob him and his wife.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

Story of the Arab dervishes who came to Tarṣūs on a pilgrimage; the rumour spreads that Baybars is one of them.

*Omitted from the Arabic version.*

(cont.)

<i>Maktʿbonout zabnē</i>	<i>Mukhtaṣar taʾriḫ al-duwal</i>
The Mamluk army in Cilicia; much pillaging, which affects the Christians.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
The Turkmens and Kurds of the Mosul region attack the Christians.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
A caravan of Christian merchants coming from Cilicia is attacked by Turkmens, and many are killed.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Cilicia is attacked by the Turkmens and horsemen from the Egyptian army; the constable Smbat and other Armenian leaders are killed.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Before all these events: violent winds in Mosul.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
The bishop of the Armenians is killed by a Muslim man.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Struggle between Baybars and the Mongols in Rūm; treachery of [Muʿīn al-Dīn] Parwāna [strongman of the Saljuq sultanate of Anatolia which was allied to the Mongols].	Struggle between Baybars and the Mongols in Rūm; treachery of [Muʿīn al-Dīn] Parwāna [strongman of the Saljuq sultanate of Anatolia which was allied to the Mongols] ( <i>the many details on the fate of the Christians given in the Syriac chronicle are omitted</i> ).
Abaqa takes revenge on [Muʿīn al-Dīn] Parwāna, putting him to death ( <i>additional commentary on the traitor's behaviour</i> ).	Abaqa takes revenge on [Muʿīn al-Dīn] Parwāna, putting him to death.
Death of Baybars ( <i>various remarks on the reasons for his death</i> ).	Death of Baybars ( <i>different remarks on the reason for his death</i> ).
An anecdote concerning Baybars' brother, set during the war between Baybars and the Mongols.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
The Kurds capture the monks of the Mār Mattai monastery.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Plot of a certain Bābā, a Persian, against Masʿūd, the Christian governor of Mosul.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Blessing of the water at the Epiphany.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>

*Makt'bonout zabnē**Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal*

Story of the Baghdad executioner.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
The Egyptian armies in Rūm and Cilicia: the Christians subjected to pillage.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Sunqur al-Ashqar refuses to recognize the new sultan, Baybars' successor.	Sunqur al-Ashqar refuses to recognize the new sultan, Baybars' successor.
The Mamluks besiege Marqab; the Hospitallers, forewarned, conceal themselves outside the fortress and defeat the Mamluk troops.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Clash between Mongols and Mamlouks between Ḥamā and Ḥimṣ; Mamluk victory.	Clash between Mongols and Mamlouks between Ḥamā and Ḥimṣ; Mamluk victory. ( <i>additional details</i> ).
Mengü Temür, Abaqa's brother, decides to come to Syria after the defeat of the Mongols; he is poisoned in Jazīrat Ibn 'Umar.	Mengü Temür, Abaqa's brother, decides to come to Syria after the defeat of the Mongols ( <i>additional details on the military campaigns</i> ).
Death of Abaqa ( <i>before his death he takes part in a Christian feast; additional comments compared to the Arabic version</i> ).	Death of Abaqa ( <i>as in the Syriac version, Barhebraeus mentions that before his death he took part in a Christian feast</i> ).
Enthronement of Tegüder Aḥmad.	Enthronement of Tegüder Aḥmad.
Tegüder Aḥmad sends a letter to the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn proposing peace ( <i>the letter is heavily abridged, with only the end given</i> ).	Tegüder Aḥmad sends a letter to the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn proposing peace.
<i>Omitted from the Syriac version.</i>	Full text of the letter.
<i>Omitted from the Syriac version.</i>	Full text of the sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn's response.
Mission of the shaykh 'Abd al-Raḥmān to Egypt, and his eventual imprisonment by al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn ( <i>many details</i> ).	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Power struggle between Tegüder Aḥmad and Arghun.	Power struggle between Tegüder Aḥmad and Arghun ( <i>additional details</i> ).
Enthronement of Arghun.	Enthronement of Arghun.
Execution of Tegüder Aḥmad.	Execution of Tegüder Aḥmad.
Arghun appoints another Christian governor, Mas'ūd's son, to Mosul.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>

(cont.)

<i>Maktʿbonout zabnē</i>	<i>Mukhtaṣar taʿriḫ al-duwal</i>
Killing of Shams-Dīn al-Juwaynī ( <i>many personal comments</i> ).	Killing of Shams-Dīn al-Juwaynī ( <i>personal comments omitted</i> ).
Al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn releases the shaykh ʿAbd al-Raḥmān from prison when he learns that the Ilkhan Arghun has taken power.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
<i>Yarlıgh</i> of the Ilkhan Arghun justifying the overthrow of Tegüder Aḥmad: he did not follow the law of his fathers but rather that of the Arabs.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
A hen lays an egg as big as a goose's.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>
Pillage of Mosul and the region by Kurds, Turkmens and Arabs, along with horsemen from the Egyptian army ( <i>many details as to the fate of the Christians</i> ).	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>

## Appendix 2

*Comparative table between ʿAṭāʾ Malik al-Juwaynī and the Chronicles of Barhebraeus*

<i>Maktʿbonout zabnē</i>	<i>Mukhtaṣar taʿriḫ al-duwal</i>	<i>Taʿriḫ-i jahāngushā</i>
<i>The Mongols before Genghis Khan</i>	<i>The Mongols before Genghis Khan</i>	<i>The Mongols before Genghis Khan</i>
Their geographical origin, then account of their misery. They [the Mongols] had clothes made out of the skins of dogs and wolves. They ate rat meat and other repugnant animals; they drank horse milk.	<i>Omitted from the Arabic version.</i>	A much more detailed account; ʿAṭāʾ Malik al-Juwaynī emphasizes the role that Genghis Khan played in relieving them from their distress.

*Makt'bonout zabnē**Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal**Ta'riḫ-i jahāngushā*

*Genghis Khan's rise to power: the struggle with Ong Khan, leader of the Kerait*

As a whole, it agrees with 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juwaynī, but Barhebraeus adds an original episode: Ong Khan is called "King John" (*Malik Yūḥanā*), a Christian leader of the Krīt (Kerait). Genghis Khan seized the power. Holy Scriptures justified Ong Khan's defeat.

*Genghis Khan's rise to power: the struggle with Ong Khan, leader of the Kerait*

As a whole, it agrees with 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juwaynī, but Barhebraeus adds an original episode: Ong Khan is called "King John" (*Malik Yūḥanā*), a Christian leader of the Krīt (Kerait). Genghis Khan seized the power. But here no Holy Scriptures justified Ong Khan's defeat.

*Genghis Khan's rise to power: the struggle with Ong Khan, leader of the Kareit*

'Aṭā' Malik al-Juwaynī begins by giving a religious legitimacy to the seizure of power by the future Great Khan: "Genghis Khan carries the name, Temüjin, according to God's decree (*ba-taqdīr wa ḥukm*) he would be master of all inhabited kingdoms." No allusion is made to the fact that Ong Khan is called "King John."

*The Teb Tenggeri episode*

God foretells Genghis Khan's election. At that time, there came a man who, I heard from trustworthy Mongols, used to walk naked, in the middle of winter, in the desert and the mountains. When he returned, he declared: "God spoke to me, and He sais: I gave the entire face of the Earth to Temüjin and his children and I have named him Genghis Khan. Tell him to be just." And they call him Tobot Tengri (*twbwt tngry*) [Teb Tenggeri].

*The Teb Tenggeri episode*

God foretells Genghis Khan's election. At that time, there came a man who, I heard from trustworthy Mongols, used to walk naked, in the middle of winter, in the desert and the mountains. When he returned, he declared: "God spoke to me, and He sais: I gave the entire face of the Earth to Temüjin and his children and I have named him Genghis Khan. Tell him to be just." And they call Tubut Tinkrī [Teb Tenggeri].

*The Teb Tenggeri episode*

God foretells Genghis Khan's election. At that time, there came a man who, I heard from trustworthy Mongols, used to walk naked, in the middle of winter, in the desert and the mountains. When he returned, he declared: "God spoke to me, and He sais: I gave the entire face of the Earth (*tamāmat rūy-i zamīn*) to Temüjin and his children and I have named him Genghis Khan. Tell him to be just." And they call Tubut Tinkrī [Teb Tenggeri].

(cont.)

<i>Makt'bonout zabnē</i>	<i>Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal</i>	<i>Ta'riḫ-i jahāngushā</i>
<i>The laws established by Genghis Khan</i>	<i>The laws established by Genghis Khan</i>	<i>The laws established by Genghis Khan</i>
Barhebraeus takes up the story of 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juwaynī, but he summarizes extensively and makes several small changes.	Omitted from the Arabic text.	A much more developed account, placed just after the introduction in praise of Genghis Khan.
<i>Account of Genghis Khan's death</i>	<i>Account of Genghis Khan's death</i>	<i>Account of Genghis Khan's death</i>
Barhebraeus relies on 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juwaynī, but in a very abridged account.	Barhebraeus relies on 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juwaynī, but the account is substantially abridged and placed in the obituaries.	A much more detailed account.

## The Historical *taqwīm* in Muslim East

The Islamic historiographical tradition has left us a number of texts composed in graphical form which combine genealogies, narrative texts and tables. A number of questions arise as to this way of writing history. At what time did these texts appear, and in what geographical area? Did they come in response to a demand from a particular readership at a particular historical moment? Or were they composed for educational and/or political reasons? Can their origin be determined? Did Arabic scientific works influence this way of writing history? To this array of questions, I will suggest some rudimentary responses in the form of hypotheses which may open some paths to further research.

*Taqwīm* were adopted at a very early stage to draw up *zīj*, the manuals of astronomical tables inspired by various models including the Sasanian period *Zīk-i Shahryār*, the Indian *Sindhind*, and Ptolemy's *Almagest* and *Handy Tables*. These manuals were intended to provide astronomers with the mathematical data that they needed to calculate the positions of the sun, moon and five principal planets.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, it appears that the chronological canons elaborated by al-Bīrūnī (d. after 442/1050) in his work *al-Āthār al-bāqiyya*,<sup>2</sup> although heir to the Ptolemaic tradition, owe their origins partly to the Greek-language Christian historian Eusebius of Caesarea. Al-Bīrūnī quotes him indirectly with regard to the calculation of *rūmī* eras. According to the editor of the text, Sachau, the reference to Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 332) is derived from the *Zīj* of Yūsuf b. Faḍl al-Yahūdī al-Khaybarī. This tradition, directly emanating from Eusebius of Caesarea's chronological canons, is to be found in Syriac historiography both before and after al-Bīrūnī, for example in the bilingual Syriac and Arabic *Chronography* of the Nestorian historian Elias of Nisibis (d. 1046),<sup>3</sup> who

\* This chapter is an abridged and revised version of a paper published under the title: "L'histoire sous forme graphique en arabe, persan et turc ottoman. Origines et fonctions," *BEO* 58–59 (2008): 10–49.

1 On the *zīj* in Islam, see D.A. King and J. Samsò, "Zīdj," *ET<sup>2</sup>* XI:537–550; David Pingree, "Historical Horoscopes," *JAOs* 82 (1962): 487–502.

2 *Chronologie orientalischer Völker von Albêrûni*, ed. C.E. Sachau (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1923, 1878<sup>1</sup>).

3 *Eliae metropolitanae Nisibeni. Opus chronologicum*, eds. E.W. Brooks and J.-B. Chabot, 2 vols. (Paris: 1909–1910).



refers to Eusebius more than once, and in the chronicle of Michael the Syrian (d. 1199), Patriarch of Antioch.

The historical texts composed in *taqwīm* form almost always combine tables with historical narrative. Such works seem to have appeared most frequently in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Some historical texts in this form are from the twelfth century, as are a number of works which have not survived, but appear from their titles to have been *taqwīm*. We may cite as an example *Mujmal al-tawārīkh*, a universal history which, according to the manuscript held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, was composed in 520/1126 by the grandson of a certain Muhallab b. Muḥammad b. Shādī, who does not give his own name.<sup>4</sup> As well as a historical narrative, the text includes tables,<sup>5</sup> geometrical drawings in the margin, several maps, and a painting. For example, on fol. 278v we find a table entitled “*Ṭabaqat al-thālatha Banī ‘Abbās*.” Its eight columns, from right to left, are headed *asmā’, al-alqāb, asmā’, al-alqāb, ibn-hā* and *alqāb*. Under each heading appear the names of persons, displayed graphically. This graphical presentation of the names of the Abbasid family is very similar to that adopted by Ibn al-Fuwaṭī in his biographical dictionary, discussed below. The author, who appears highly interested in stories and legends, has preserved a great deal of cultural information, in particular by recording oral traditions.<sup>6</sup> In the thirteenth century, the Persian historian Minhāj al-Dīn al-Juzjānī in his *Ṭabaqāt-i Nāṣirī* speaks of a historical text, which has not survived, composed by Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad al-‘Imādī. The title, *Ta’rikh-i mujadwal*, suggests that this work was composed in tabular form.<sup>7</sup>

In the fourteenth century, we find not only historical *taqwīm* but also other types of texts adopting this form of presentation. I will categorize these as a “parahistorical” literary genre, which includes geographical works, biographical dictionaries, and chancellery manuals. Perhaps the authors of this period felt a need to rationalize information in order to make it more directly accessible. Gabrielle Spiegel, in his works on historiography in the Latin West, has shown that when reading medieval texts we must situate them in the social and cultural context in which they took shape. They represent a changed way

4 The *Mujmal al-tawārīkh wa-l-qīṣaṣ* is held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, at class mark Persan 62. Fac-simile edition of a manuscript preserved in Staatsbibliothek at Berlin by I. Afshar and M. Omidisalar (Tehran: Society for Promotion of Persian Culture, 2001).

5 Fol. 277v–280r.

6 Iraj Afshar and Maḥmūd Omidisalar (eds.), “Introduction,” 4.

7 Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 143.

of seeing history.<sup>8</sup> The adoption of new models in Western historiography corresponded to social and political changes. These analytical approaches can be transposed to Islam. It seems that in this period, rulers felt a desire to make historical information more readily accessible by rationalizing the graphic presentation of texts, either for purposes of political propaganda or in response to the demands of a particular public.

### The *taqwīm* in the “Parahistorical” Literature

#### *The Geographical Tradition*

Geographical works were particularly well-suited to this visual method of presenting information. The most famous of such works is Abū l-Fidā’s *Taqwīm al-buldān*, completed in 721/1321. It is a descriptive geography accompanied by physical and mathematical data presented in tabular form.<sup>9</sup> At the end of each section of narrative text describing a given “country” (*bilād*), the author inserts *taqwīm*. The purpose of these tables, similar in form to the *zīj*, is to make the geographical coordinates (latitude and longitude) of locations readily accessible so as to facilitate use of the work. The tables are set out on double pages. The right-hand page is divided into ten columns subdivided into cells, and is read from right to left. The first column (*saṭr al-‘adad*) contains an index number for each place name in the table. The second (*al-asmā’*) gives the names of cities or regions. In the third column (*asmā’ al-manqūl*), the author cites his sources. In the fourth and fifth columns, he gives the degrees of longitude (*al-ṭawīl*) with minutes (*al-daḡā’iq*) and in the sixth and seventh columns, the degrees of latitude (*al-‘arḍ*) with minutes. The eighth column contains astronomical climes (*al-iqlīm al-ḥaqīqī*), while in the ninth (*al-iqlīm al-‘urfī*) the author gives the customary name of the region or city. Finally, in the tenth column (*ḍabṭ al-asmā’*), the author gives the vocalization of the place names mentioned in the second. On the left-hand page, which is divided into rows corresponding to the cells of the previous page, the author provides geographical information of a more general scope. Abū l-Fidā in his *Taqwīm al-buldān* clearly draws inspiration from the *zīj* to assist his reader in locating the cities and regions mentioned in the tables with the help of this mathematical and physical information.

8 Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *The Past as Text. The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

9 *Géographie d’Aboulféda*, eds. M. Reinaud and M. De Slane (Paris: Imprimerie royale, MDCCCXL).

*The Use of Tables in Biographical Works: An Isolated Case?*

We come closer to history proper with the Arabic biographical dictionary entitled *Talkhīṣ majmaʿ al-ādāb fī muʿjam al-alqāb*, composed by Kamāl al-Dīn Abū l-Faḍl ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Shaybānī al-Ḥanbalī, better known as Ibn al-Fuwaṭī (642–733/1244–1323). He was a librarian, copyist and author of historical works in the Ilkhanid period. He frequented intellectual circles in Azerbaijan and the court of Öljeitü, enabling him to amass much material of not only biographical but also a cultural nature.<sup>10</sup> The autograph manuscript of volume IV, dated 712/1312, is held in Maktabat al-Asad in Damascus.<sup>11</sup> Jacqueline Sublet emphasizes that the author has devised “a table that presents the medieval Arabic personal name in all its complexity in a didactic manner.”<sup>12</sup> Ibn al-Fuwaṭī takes account not only of the complexity of the personal name, but also of the hierarchy of its elements.<sup>13</sup> Here we see once more the concerns of the scientific authors, whose works in tabular form may have influenced him in an entirely original graphical choice.

Ibn al-Fuwaṭī uses red ink to outline his tables and black ink for the text. On opening the manuscript, the reader finds, on the right-hand page, a double framework in red divided into ten horizontal sections, each of which in turn contains six cells in which are noted the following information: *laqab*, *kunya*, *ism*, descent, *nisba* and profession. On the left-hand page the same horizontal divisions appear, and each resulting space contains a summary biography of the subject.

This example demonstrates the concern of the author of this famous biographical dictionary to assist his reader by presenting onomastic information in graphical form, enabling the latter to quickly distinguish the different components of the relevant person’s name. These components are accompanied by a short biographical entry including the name of the subject’s masters, the positions he held, his intellectual activities, the titles of any works he composed, and, frequently, some verses composed by him.

10 Devin Deweese, “Cultural Transmission and Exchange in the Mongol Empire: Notes from the Biographical Dictionary of Ibn al-Fuwaṭī,” in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 11–29.

11 Jacqueline Sublet, “Dans l’Islam médiéval, nom en expansion, nom à l’étroit: l’exemple d’Ibn al-Fuwaṭī,” in *L’écriture du nom propre*, ed. A.-M. Christin (Paris: L’Harmattan, 1998), 120, n. 4: “This is the sole copy of part IV (*al-ğuz’ al-rābi’*) of the text, held at class mark Ta’rikh 267.”

12 Jacqueline Sublet, “Dans l’Islam médiéval,” 117.

13 Jacqueline Sublet, “Dans l’Islam médiéval,” 120.

*Graphical Presentation of Information in Some Chancellery Manuals*

Chancellery manuscripts in graphic form begin to appear in the Timurid period. One such case is *Makhsan al-inshā'*, composed in 907/1501 by Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn b. 'Alī al-Sabzawārī Wā'iz al-Bayhāqī (m. 910/1504),<sup>14</sup> and dedicated to Sultan Mu'izz al-Dīn Abū l-Ghāzī Ḥusayn al-Bāyqarā (r. 875–912/1470–1506) and his vizier Mīr 'Alī Shīr Nawā'i.<sup>15</sup> The manuscript held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France is a copy completed in 953/1547. It consists of a compilation of model letters, in Persian and Arabic, presented in the form of reference tables made up of several columns. This particular manuscript is in fact trilingual, but that is due to a later addition. Two pages have been added before the beginning of the text (fol. 1r–v et fol. 2r). A selection of twenty-five isolated *bayt* in Persian and two in Turkic are copied on folio 1, while on folio 2 there are thirteen Persian *bayt* as well as three in Turkic. These fragments of poetry have been copied by at least two different hands. One also observes that the manuscript was subsequently repaginated.

The copy, in Ottoman Nasta'liq script, is anonymous. It may have been made in an Ottoman environment, which could explain the presence of the Turkic verses. It seems that the Ottomans took an interest in the eastern Chaghataid culture. The Uyghur alphabet appears to have been in use alongside the Arabic script in the Ottoman chancelleries. At his court in Erdin, Sultan Murād II (first reign 824–48/1421–44, second reign 850–55/1446–51) employed secretaries who could draw up *firmān* in Uyghur, and the crown princes were taught the alphabet.<sup>16</sup> Only one document survives in the form of a *fath-nāma* drawn up in the Uyghur alphabet with an interlinear Arabic translation, that in which Mehmet II (first reign 848–50/1444–46, second reign 853–86/1451–81) announces his victory over the ruler of the Aq Qoyunlu, Uzun Ḥasan, to the local governors of eastern Anatolia.<sup>17</sup> It may be that the Ottoman sultan chose to draw up this *fath-nāma* in the Uyghur alphabet because Uzun Ḥasan himself used it in his *firmān* (albeit in accordance with the Perso-Mongolian chancellery tradition).<sup>18</sup>

14 The *Makhsan al-insha'* is held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France at class mark Persan 73. On this manuscript, see Francis Richard, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans* (Paris: Bibliothèque nationale, 1989), 101. See fig. 1, fol. 6v and fig. 2, fol. 7v.

15 The dedication appears on fol. 4v. This manuscript arrived in Colbert's library on 24 May 1687, Francis Richard, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans*. There also exists an abridged version by the same author, the *Ṣahīfa-i Shāhī* (Suppl. persan 467).

16 See M.F. Köprülü, "Osmanlı," part II, *ET*<sup>2</sup> VIII:215.

17 On this *fath-nāma*, see R.R. Arat, "Fatih Sultan Mehmed'in yarluđı," *Tükiyat Mecmuasi* 6 (1936–39): 285–322.

18 See Abolala Soudavar, "The Mongol Legacy of Persian *Farmāns*," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 407–421.

The trilingualism employed in this correspondence manual bears witness to the proximity of the Turkic and Persian cultures.

## History in Graphical Form

### *The Combination of Narrative Texts and Family Trees*

Among the historical works of the Mongol and Timurid periods, there are two special books containing the genealogical history of the “Golden family” of Genghis Khan. To this group of works belongs the “*Shu‘ab-i panjgāna*” or “The Five Peoples” which is a supplement of Rashid al-Dīn’s *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh* and the *Mu‘izz al-ansāb* written in Persian by an anonymous author in 830/1426–27.<sup>19</sup>

The *Shu‘ab-i panjgāna* is dedicated to the genealogies of Arabs, Mongols, Jews, Franks, and Chinese.<sup>20</sup> The latter section contains extensive genealogical tables of all the descendants of Genghis Khan down to the fourteenth century. The *Shu‘ab-i panjgāna* is bilingual, names are written in both Arabic and Uyghur script.<sup>21</sup> This work contains information not found elsewhere. In the introduction, Rashīd al-Dīn says that the genealogical material conforms to the “Mongolian book” (*Kitāb-i muḡhūl*).<sup>22</sup> He speaks of his technique of composition of the genealogies, using various colours and lines for various branches of dynasties.<sup>23</sup> For the more important Genghiskhanids princes, they are long lists of their wives and ministers which include data on their family and ethnic background.<sup>24</sup>

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- 19 The copy held in Bibliothèque Nationale de France at class mark Persan 67 is not dated, but it was probably written in sixteenth century, see Francis Richard, *Catalogue des manuscrits persans*, 97.
- 20 This text is known in a single unpublished manuscript in the Topkapi Sarayi Museum, cat. no. 2932. On the *Shu‘ab-i panjgāna*, see A. Zeki Velidi Togan, “The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashīd al-Dīn,” *CAJ* 7 (1962): 66; Sholeh A. Quinn, “The *Mu‘izz al-Ansāb* and *Shu‘ab-i Panjgānah* as Sources for the Chaghatayid Period of History: A Comparative Analysis,” *CAJ* 33/3–4 (1989): 231; Shiro Ando, *Timuridische Emire nach dem Mu‘izz al-ansāb. Untersuchung zur Stammearistokratie Zentralasiens im 14. und 15. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Klaus Schwartz Verlag, 1992), 13–50; Tursun Ikamovich Sultanov, “*Mu‘izz al-ansāb* and Spurious Chingīzids,” *Manuscripta Orientalia* 2/3 (1996): 4; Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 92–93.
- 21 Sholeh A. Quinn, “The *Mu‘izz al-Ansāb* and *Shu‘ab-i Panjgānah*,” 233.
- 22 Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 93.
- 23 A. Zeki Velidi Togan, “The Composition of the History of the Mongols by Rashīd al-Dīn,” 66.
- 24 Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 92. The CVII chapter of the *Yuan Shih* includes genealogical tables of Genghis Khan and its descendants, see Louis Hambis, *Le chapitre CVII du Yuan Che* (Leiden, Brill, 1945), 58.

As for the motives which urged the anonymous author of the *Mu'izz al-ansāb* to undertake the writing of such a specific historical work, in the foreword of the book he says:

In these days, in the year 830 of Hijra, Shāh Rukh ordered to make finding a comprehensible way of narrating materials, a book of genealogy (*nasab-nāma*), verifying the genealogical history *shajarat-i ansāb-i salātīn-i Mughūl* containing the names of his ancestors [...]. After the genealogical history of the Mongols Sultans comes the genealogy of the ancestors of Amīr Tīmūr Qarāchār-nūyān of the Bārlās tribe.<sup>25</sup>

Scholarly investigations prove that the part of *Mu'izz al-ansāb* devoted to the Genghiskhanids was borrowed from *Shu'ab-i panjgāna* by Rashīd al-Dīn. But the author copied only the genealogical tables of the house of Genghis Khan and added the genealogies of the Genghiskhanids up to the beginning of the 15th century along with those of Timur and the first Timurids.<sup>26</sup> When comparing the differences in the written portions of each genealogy, it becomes even more apparent that the author of the *Mu'izz al-ansāb* must have access to the *Shu'ab-i panjgāna* because of verbatim similarities in some sections. However, as Sholeh Quinn remarks, the anonymous author omitted certain things and "in some cases it seemed that these omissions were fairly deliberate."<sup>27</sup>

Although *Mu'izz al-ansāb* is in manuscript form, it is written vertically, imitating the layout of a scroll. Lines of different colours mark the ascendance of the Mongol khans and the Timurid sultans. Circular spaces are set aside for the portraits of the most important rulers, but sadly they have not been filled.<sup>28</sup> Each folio contains, in different places, information on the reign of the relevant khan.<sup>29</sup> But what must be emphasized is that information of some interest with regard to the choices made by the text's anonymous author has been entered on each side of the portrait of the sovereign. On the right appear biographies of the great emirs, and on the left biographies of the khan's wives. The presentation highlights these two categories of person. In the Turkic-Mongol world, the emirs undoubtedly held much power, but the khan's wives

25 Tursun Ikamovich Sultanov, "Mu'izz al-ansāb and Spurious Chingīzids," 4.

26 Tursun Ikamovich Sultanov, "Mu'izz al-ansāb and Spurious Chingīzids," 4–5.

27 Sholeh A. Quinn, "The Mu'izz al-Ansāb and Shu'ab-i Panjgānah," 237.

28 In the British Library manuscript, portraits have been painted, see Sholeh A. Quinn, "The Mu'izz al-Ansāb and Shu'ab-i Panjgānah," 233, n. 17.

29 See fig. 3, fol. 13r of Persan 67 (Offsprings of Genghis Khan).

also played a major political role.<sup>30</sup> Beatrice Manz emphasizes that the *Mu'izz al-ansāb* is a mirror of the formal organization of Timurid administration, the two sides of government are separately listed; first come the emirs, almost all of whom were Turko-Mongolian, and then others offices, and near the end we have sections for Persian and Turkic scribes.<sup>31</sup> The purpose of *Mu'izz al-ansāb* is clearly political. By sponsoring this work, Shāh Rukh hoped to make the Timurids heirs of the empire created by Genghis Khan. But one can also discern the author's ambition to rationalize or summarize the very copious historical data on the Mongol and Timurid lineages by putting down the main elements of the complex history of the two great empires in a graphical visual form that would be easy to consult.

This "graphical-genealogical" presentation of history may be compared with a similar phenomenon which appeared in Europe at the same time, that is, in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Beginning in the last thirty years of the thirteenth century, and especially during the reigns of Edward I (1272–1307) and Edward II (1307–27), a new type of abridged focused on genealogical schemata flourished in England. At the same time in France, genealogies were introduced into the historical narrative. The Latin version of Guillaume de Nangis' *Chronique abrégée* (1285–1300) was composed in the form of a family tree with a trunk and branches. Of interest here is that the author takes care to state in the introduction that, the history of the kings of France being lengthy, he has decided to draw it up in the form of a family tree because that is easier to memorize by sight:

Considerans hystorie regum Francorum prolixitatem . . . temptavi seriem cunctarum hystoriarum de ipsis loquentibus dub quidam arboris formula redigere . . . propter subjectam oculis formam, sit oblectatio, et studiosis facile possit prehabita pre oculis memorie commendari.<sup>32</sup>

These genealogical histories, as Gabrielle Spiegel emphasizes, are written first and foremost to legitimate the power of a noble family or to assert political

30 See Denis Sinor, "Some Observations on Women in Early and Medieval Inner Asian History," in *The Role of Women in the Altaic World. Permanent International Altaistic Conference, 44th Meeting, Walbergberg, 26–31 August 2001*, ed. V. Veit (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007), 261–268.

31 Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 79. The men listed as Turkic scribes are rarely mentioned elsewhere.

32 Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Latin 6184, fol. 1r.

power.<sup>33</sup> In other words, the purpose is to graphically express the social memory of the group, as in *Shu'ab-i panjgāna* and *Mu'izz al-ansāb* which may be compared to the Western royal genealogies. The authors seek to impose upon future generations a social representation of the various clans that made up the princely lines of the Mongols and Timurids. Genealogy, presented in a form where the graphic and the textual combine, seems to have had an impact on the way that historical narrative was shaped in East and West alike, but especially in the Turkic-Mongol world. In these works we find a combination of graphic, iconographic and textual elements. Historical information is provided in the form of a commented diagram, and in this symbolic and summarized form, appears clearer to the reader. The impact of the works in expressing the social claims of a noble family or the political legitimacy of a dynastic power is therefore directly apparent.

### *Historical Chronicles and jadwal*

I now consider a universal history in Persian, composed by the Timurid historian Mu'īn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī for Timur's grandson, Iskandar b. 'Umar Shaykh. In 816/1413, Naṭanzī composed for this prince an apparently untitled epitome of general history to 807/1405 which was later dubbed the "Iskandar Anonymous." But in 817/1414, Shāh Rukh dethroned the Timurid prince. The author revised his chronicle to reflect the altered politic realities and presented a second version, the *Muntakhab al-tawārikh-i Mu'īnī*, to the sultan in Herat on 22 Rajab 817/7 October 1414.<sup>34</sup> A distinctive feature of this second version is that it concludes the history of each reign, composed in prose, with summary dynastic tables (*jadwal*). The chronicle includes twenty-eight *jadwal*, each with fourteen to thirty headings.<sup>35</sup> It represents a considerable effort by Mu'īn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī to synthesize historical information. The author not only presents the rulers, their memorable deeds and the major dates of their reigns, but above all seeks to sketch an individual portrait of each one of them. Most of the information concerns the lineage of each ruler (*laqab, nisba, kunya*, father's name, mother's name, number of children, number of wives) and the features of his public official life as ruler (his works, the great men of his time, *qāḍī*,

33 Gabrielle M. Spiegel, "Genealogy. Form and Function in Medieval Historiography," in *The Past as Text*, 104.

34 On this author, see Jean Aubin, *Extraits du Muntakhab al-tawārikh-i Mu'īnī (Anonyme d'Iskandar)*, ed. J. Aubin (Tehran: Librairie Khayyam, 1957), 1–8.

35 Manuscript Suppl. persan 1651. See fig. 4, fol. 12r, (Mythical kings of Ancient Persia, Prophets and wise men of their time).



*amīr al-umarāʾ*, ministers, date of accession, length of reign, date and cause of death, place of burial).

The originality of the tables, however, lies in the set of headings which is intended to describe the “personality” of members of the dynasty: their qualities, signal acts, customs and talents. These tables cast a notable light on how a Persian Timurid man of letters saw the princely families of previous centuries. These more personal headings are divided into four rubrics: first of all, *sīrat*; then *aṭwār* and *pīsha*; then *ādat*; and finally *hunar*.<sup>36</sup> The term *sīrat* conveys the idea of an exemplary life and conduct. In the tables, this heading deals with the historical view of the figure that should be adopted: his qualities, but also his failings, as a prince. The two headings *aṭwār* and *pīsha* present the “public face” of the sovereign and an appraisal of his deeds.<sup>37</sup> The term *aṭwār* refers to his behaviour, while *pīsha* concerns the profession or occupation to which a man devotes himself and from which he may earn his livelihood. Under these two terms Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī presents the rulers’ works and favoured occupations. The term *ādat* is generally used to refer to a person’s habits. Under this heading, al-Naṭanzī presents his private life and personal inclinations. The term *hunar* refers to acquired as opposed to innate qualities (*jawhar*). Under this heading he describes the tastes and talents of the members of the dynasty. The headings *ādat* and *hunar* serve to provide a “private image” of the subject in parallel to the content of the headings of *aṭwār* and *pīsha* which set out his public behaviour.

From the Mongol period on, Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī describes the personality of his subjects under a greater number of more detailed headings. He notes various building projects undertaken by the members of these princely dynasties of nomadic origins. Ananda Musalmān Khān [*sic*] is credited with building “mosques and mobile schools in the imperial camp” (*masājīd wa madāris dar urdū sākh*t).<sup>38</sup> Here al-Naṭanzī has confused Ananda with his son, Ūrūk Tīmūr, king of the Tanguts of Siberia, who converted to Islam. With one of his emirs, he had tent mosques set up in his camp.<sup>39</sup> While the author of the *Muntakhab*

36 On these notions, see ‘A. Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma* (Tehran: Muʿassasa-i Dihkhudā, s.d.) II:2754, *aṭwār*; IV:5993–5995, *pīsha*; IX:13883, *sīrat*; X:15655, *ādat*; XV:23567, *hunar*.

37 These two headings never appear in the same table, with the sole exception of that dedicated to the Umayyads, where the author uses the two together but in a single heading (*aṭwār wa pīsha*).

38 Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī, fol. 384 r.

39 An illuminated manuscript of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmiʿ al-tawārikh*, held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, at the mark Suppl. Persan 113, includes on fol. 139v a depiction of a Qurʾān reading session in one such mobile religious school in his camp, see fig. 5.

*al-tawārīkh* is mistaken as to the precise identity of this prince, he does recall that he adapted two features of Muslim culture to the nomadic way of life: the mosque and the religious school.

The tables in *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh* also have the merit of providing cultural data absent from the chronicle's text. Among the cultural traits mentioned are many relating to writing, but the only references to the Mongol script are in the table dedicated to the Chaghataids, considered to be the khanate where Mongol culture and law lasted longest. Chaghatai is mentioned in the table as having strengthened "the Mongol law" (*yāsā*).<sup>40</sup> In the material on the Chaghataids, we find a total of five references to Turkic writing, five to Persian writing, and one to Mongol: Shāh Tīmūr "wrote well in Mongolian" (*khatt-i mughūl nīkū niwīshī*).<sup>41</sup> Several of the skills that every cultured man in Persian society should have are cited by al-Nāṭanzī, who mentions chess twice, music thrice, and poetry six times.<sup>42</sup> He thus presents the Turkic-Mongols, and in particular the Chaghataids, as men of letters, while also mentioning the traditional skills of nomads: hunting (mentioned thrice) and archery (also thrice). The *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh* deserves special attention as a cultural document reflecting the dynamic relationship between nomadic and sedentary styles of life characteristic of Iran and Central Asia at this period.

In the tables of *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh*, the sovereigns and the members of their line are described more in terms of their personal qualities than with regard to their acts as rulers. They enjoy the qualities of the ideal prince of the Mirrors: justice, learning, and wisdom. This universal history, like *Mu'izz al-ansāb*, is a work of Timurid historiography. Most of the Timurid material is concentrated in two chapters headed "The Amirs of Transoxiana" and "His Majesty, the Sultan, Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction."<sup>43</sup> Timur claimed an association with the line of Genghis Khan by presenting himself as the protector of the Chaghataid khanate, whose eastern lands he invaded in Rabī' 11 761/February–March 1360. The political measures adopted by Timur to justify his seizure of power explain why Mu'īn al-Dīn al-Nāṭanzī speaks highly of that dynasty, but also why he disparages the khans of the Golden Horde with whom Timur was in conflict (especially Toqtamish). The last table of the chronicle, dedicated to Timur and his sons, presents him as a wise (*hakīm*), forbearing

40 Mu'īn al-Dīn al-Nāṭanzī, fol. 265r.

41 Mu'īn al-Dīn al-Nāṭanzī, fol. 315 v.

42 See Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, "Adab," *EIr* 1:433–435.

43 On the relation between Timurid historians and the chronicle of Nāṭanzī, see John Woods, "The Rise of Timūrid Historiography," *Journal of the Near Eastern Studies* 46/2 (1987): 89–93.

monarch (*ḥalīm*) and a holy warrior (*ghāzī*). Timur is thus described with reference to his conduct as an exemplary Muslim: “he held religious law in exceptional regard” (*dar sharīʿat mubālaghat mi-namūd*).<sup>44</sup>

After describing Timur as a perfect Muslim ruler, Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī credits more specifically nomadic merits to his sons: they are brave (*bahādur*) and generous (*sakhī*). Timur’s line appears as a continuation, via the khans of the Chaghataid khanate, of Genghis Khan’s line—but in a strictly Islamic framework. As a matter of fact, Timur and his sons contrast with all the Turkic-Mongol princes of the previous period. The qualities attributed to the Timurids link them to the tradition of the Islamic Mirrors for the Princes and to the nomadic world. The nuanced presentation of the Turkic-Mongol rulers implicitly enhances the standing of the Timurid dynasty. In the tables, which may be considered pedagogical documents, Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī presents the Timurid dynasty in an idealized form. But in his account of Timur’s reign, he writes that the emirs had often wished more victories for him, and that he had himself declared that “the celestial decree and the law of Genghis Khan” (*yarlīgh-i āsmānī wa tūra-yi chinjīzkhānī*) gave him the right to rule.<sup>45</sup> In other words, while presenting himself as an exemplary Muslim, the Timurid conqueror had not by any means forsaken his Turkic-Mongol culture.

### *The Ottoman Historical taqwīm*

To conclude this inventory of graphical historic texts that combine tables, genealogies and narrative text, I will examine two chronographies of the Ottoman period which take the form of *taqwīm* but include textual commentaries in the tables and in the margins. The *jadwal* sections of these histories are preceded by an introduction in which the author explains the various ways of reckoning time since Adam.<sup>46</sup> This gives the names of the months used by the Arabs, the Syrians, the Persians, and so forth. There is an explanation of the *jalālī* calendar,<sup>47</sup> instituted by the Saljuq ruler Jalāl al-Dīn Malik Shāh in the eleventh century at the prompting of a group of Persian astronomers. The introduction also gives an account of the Sino-Uyghur calendar used by the

44 Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī, fol. 363 r.

45 Muʿīn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī, *Extraits du Muntakhab al-tavarikh-i Muʿīni*, 206.

46 The anonymous author of the second chronography was content to copy Kātib Chelebi’s introduction verbatim.

47 The *jalālī* or *malikī* was invented with the purpose of fixing the date of *nawrūz*. See B. Van Dalen, “Taʾrīkh,” *EI*<sup>2</sup> x:287.

Turkic-Mongols, which was based on a cycle of twelve years each bearing the name of an animal.<sup>48</sup>

The first of these Ottoman-era texts which I will consider is entitled *Taqwīm al-tawārīkh*.<sup>49</sup> This is a chronology in tabular form, beginning with the creation of Adam and ending in 1058/1648, the year when the text was completed by Ḥājji Khalifa, also known as Kātib Chelebi (1017–67/1609–57).<sup>50</sup> The author, in his *Mizān al-ḥaqq fī ikhtiyār al-aḥaqq*, explains that this text was written to serve as an index to his great universal history in Arabic, *Fadhalakat al-tawārīkh*, composed in 1051/1641.<sup>51</sup> The introduction (*muqaddima*) and conclusion (*khatima*) of this *taqwīm* are in Ottoman Turkish, while the content of the tables is in Persian; but the numerical dates are also transcribed in Turkish script. The text's bilingualism is a further indication that we are at the meeting point of the Persian and Turkish worlds, which, as we have seen, had long been culturally close.

Kātib Chelebi's *Taqwīm al-tawārīkh* was of considerable influence, as several other Ottoman authors used it as model for their own texts. This tradition comes to an end in the late nineteenth century with a history by Ibrāhīm Agāh Pasha which tardily takes this form.<sup>52</sup> Kātib Chelebi presumably wished to assist the readers of his prose universal history in Arabic by providing them with a sort of index, drawn up in the form of tables.<sup>53</sup> The purpose here is once more educational: to simplify a complex history by providing a quick overall summary that allows the reader to refer to the "great chronicle," so that if he wishes to examine himself more thoroughly on particular moments in history he can consult the latter with greater ease.

48 This calendar was introduced in Iran under the Ilkhans. The oldest *zīj* of this kind is *Zīj-i ilkhānī*. It is similar to the solar-lunar calendar, the *Ta Ming Li*, adopted by Genghis Khan after his conquest of northern China in 1215, see Raymond Mercier, "The Greek 'Persian Syntaxis' and the *Zij-i Ilkhānī*," *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Sciences* 34 (1984): 33–60; Charles Melville, "The Chinese Uighur Animal Calendar in Persian Historiography of the Mongol Period," *Iran* 32 (1994): 83–98; Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 161–175.

49 The manuscript is held in Bibliothèque Nationale de France at class mark Suppl. Persan 1739.

50 See O. S. Gökyay, "Kātib Čelebi," *ET* 2 iv:791–792. On his *Taqwīm al-tawārīkh*, see Franz Babinger, *Die Geschichtsschreiber der Osmanen und ihre Werke* (Leipzig: Otto Harrassowitz, 1927), 196–197, and Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph bei der Arbeit Entstehung und Gedankenwelt von Kātib Čelebis Ğihānnümā* (Berlin: Klaus Schwartz Verlag, 2003).

51 Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph*, 59.

52 Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph*, 60.

53 Gottfried Hagen, *Ein osmanischer Geograph*, 247.

Kātib Chelebi's *Taqwīm al-tawārīkh* begins with some chronological tables but they are highly simplified by comparison with the authentic *zīj*. There are no headings that would serve to describe individuals, nor is there any cultural material. The author merely presents, in the form of *jadwal*, lists of the high-ranking officials of the Ottoman state, accompanied by some biographical material. Unlike the Timurid man of letters Mu'īn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī, the traditional idea of the perfect prince does not form this writer's frame of reference.

Another Ottoman *taqwīm*, by an anonymous author, is also held at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.<sup>54</sup> To judge by the last dated information included before the text's conclusion, it appears to have been composed in the early eighteenth century. It is to some degree based on Kātib Chelebi's *Taqwīm al-tawārīkh*.<sup>55</sup> The author has copied that work for events up to Kātib Chelebi's time, but the text contains much more information and commentary, especially in the margins. This anonymous *Taqwīm* has no title, but the owner's name is marked on the cover of the manuscript. He was called Meḥmed Emīn and, to judge from his inscribed position, was the page responsible for the sultan's wardrobe (*chuqadār-i enderūn*). He would thus have been in direct contact with him and had access to his private chamber. Like many of those serving within the palace, the *chuqadār-i enderūn* received a religious and literary education. One may imagine that Meḥmed Emīn bought the manuscript in order to rapidly acquire a knowledge of history that could be of use to him in his position serving the sultan.

These two authors are concerned primarily with the history of Islam. They dedicate only a few *jadwal* to the Iranian kings, and these are confined to the most basic form. Events since the Hijra are grouped in periods of eight years by Kātib Chelebi, and in periods of ten years by the anonymous author. It is no surprise that the greatest amount of detail in these two *taqwīm* is in the section dealing with Ottoman history. The authors provide lists in *jadwal* form of the great figures of the state, which indicate the hierarchy of positions in the empire: first the sultan, then the grand vizier, *shaykh-i islām*, *quḍāt-i 'asākir* and so forth. There are *jadwal* for the *quḍāt-i 'asākir* of Constantinople and of each region of the empire, and for the *nāqib-i ishrāf*, who was responsible for verifying the *nasab* of persons claiming descent from the Prophet. There are also *jadwal* listing the sultans' "spiritual directors" (*khwājagān-i salāṭīn-i 'Uthmanān*). These latter did not hold any official position as such; rather, their status derived from their personality and the links that they had with the sultan, whom they advised above all on religious matters. These chronogra-

54 The manuscript is held in Bibliothèque Nationale de France at class mark Suppl. turc 1149.

55 Suppl. persan 1739, see fig. 6, Kātib Chelebi, fol. 16r and fig. 7, fol. 6v of Suppl. turc 1149.

phies provide an excellent summary of the hierarchy of official positions in the Ottoman empire, but no information whatsoever of a cultural nature.

These historical *taqwīm* appear above all in the fourteenth century, and specifically in the Persian and Turkish worlds. To this date I have only found only one text of this kind in Arabic. Anonymous and untitled, its script indicates that it too dates to the fourteenth century, but it may have been composed earlier.<sup>56</sup> The manuscript is made up of about 60 folios which deal with the Muslim rulers of the Arab world. Information on each ruler appears in a number of columns: father's name, mother's name, patronymic, *laqab*, year of birth, date of accession, date of death, length of reign, cause of death and place of burial. These headings are extremely similar to those chosen by Mu'īn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī, but the qualities and abilities of the rulers are not mentioned. This historical *taqwīm* continues a work attributed to Abū l-Fidā', *Tibr al-maskūb*. The two texts appear to have been written by the same author, but *Tibr al-maskūb* ends ten years after Abū l-Fidā's death.<sup>57</sup> The authorship of this tabular history cannot readily be determined. In any case, unless proven otherwise, histories in *jadwal* form do not appear to have had any real success in the Arab world, where historiography remained much closer to the traditional models that arose with the birth of Islam.

To judge from the texts dealt with above, their purpose seems to have been educational: to provide quick access to information, even in the case of Mu'īn al-Dīn al-Naṭanzī who ends his account of each dynasty's history with a summary in *jadwal* form of what he considers to have been the most significant events. He also seeks to give an individual portrait of each member of the dynasty, providing information on their behaviour and cultural details which do not appear in the text. We have observed that the choice of headings is indicative of the author's cultural background: the Persian *taqwīm* is the work of men of letters, while the Arabic and Ottoman Turkish ones were composed by more traditional scholars. Clearly the information provided in the Ottoman chronographies could not be of use to a researcher, who would have to refer to the details in the "great chronicles." These were handbooks which could be easily consulted to find the names and biographical details of major figures in the empire.

The works that combine genealogies and narrative texts are of great importance for the evolution of historical models. They reinterpret history on the basis of concepts of lineage. As we have seen, Rashīd al-Dīn's *Shu'ab-i panjgāna*,

56 The manuscript is held in Dār al-Kutūb at Cairo at class mark Ta'rīkh 86m.

57 See Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography*, 146, n. 1.

and *Mu'izz al-ansāb*, present history in the form of a principle of hereditary succession, one of whose aims is clearly political: to portray the Timurids as the heirs and legitimate successors to the Mongol empire. The other purpose is more of a cultural nature: to preserve a social image of these nomadic dynasties whose own culture was primarily oral.

Finally, the trickiest question to answer is that of the origin or origins of this graphic manner of presenting history. The historical *taqwīm* developed most notably in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, in a contact zone between Turks, Persians and Syriac Christians. The last-mentioned had access to Arabic, Persian and Turkic, as is proven by the role they played as interpreters in the Mongol period. Syriac culture was a major vector of cultural transmission between the eastern Christian world and the Islamic world. It is possible that the distant roots of these Islamic historical *taqwīm* lay in the Syriac chronicles, such as the *Chronography* of Elias of Nisibis. That author combines a summary of historical events listed year by year in the first part of his chronicle, in the form of chronological tables in two columns, one in Syriac and the other in Arabic. The calendars of the various peoples are relegated to the second part of the work. The layout of the Ottoman *taqwīm* greatly resembles that of Elias of Nisibis' *Chronology*, but the Ottoman historians cut down the Syriac chronological tables, which would have been too complicated for the intended readership of these texts, to a more appropriate size.

It is hard to resolve the question of the origins of this manner of writing history in *jadwal* form. One might also suggest that the *zīj* or the magic squares were the original inspiration for this graphic presentation of history. But if that were the case, the *taqwīm* would surely have come into use in historiography or the "para-historical" literature at an earlier stage. Muslim scientists concerned with medicine and astronomy sought to simplify the works translated from Greek to Arabic for educational purposes at a fairly early stage. But my research to date indicates that these texts seem to appear in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, even if there are a few antecedents. The historical *taqwīm* seem to belong more to the Turkic-Persian tradition than to the Arabic tradition. The question of the origin or origins of these historical *taqwīm* remains open for the moment. It will only be possible to progress it on the basis of further investigations deep in the holdings of libraries.

**PART 2**

*Shamanism and Islam*







## Shamanism and Islam in Central Asia. Two Antinomic Religious Universes?

We have little information on shamanism in the Mongol period due its the oral nature. The Islamic medieval sources describe certain religious practices of the Turkic-Mongol tribes which cannot be understood without considering their cultural background. But the historian meets great difficulties to find such information on the Mongols in medieval times. Some facts regarding the shamans' practices of divination may be recollected from the *Secret History of the Mongols*, but in the end one is left with little concrete information. Our knowledge of the representational system of the medieval Mongols therefore rests on the accounts of Western missionaries and travellers who criss-crossed the Empire in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Starting from the seventeenth century, after the conquest of Siberian territories, when the Russians discover hitherto unknown peoples, we have access to more reliable information. The Russians seek descriptions of the nations dwelling in their empire. In the eighteenth century, German explorers were sent by the Tsars to inquire from indigenous people about their rituals and their beliefs. Reports resulting from those field researches are sources of high quality information.<sup>1</sup> Further descriptions of shamanism appear in the Soviet period, when surveys were carried out concerning the religious beliefs of the state's populations. In addition to all these data, we have the ethnological investigations of the twentieth century. Lacking accurate descriptions of shamanism in the medieval sources, we endeavour with great caution to transpose the results of these various investigations onto the medieval Mongols, aware that shamanism, like all religious

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<sup>1</sup> Among others, see Johann Gottlieb Georgi (1729–1802), *Beschreibung aller Nationen des Russischen Reiches, ihrer Lebensart, Religion, Gebräuche, Wohnung, Kleidung und Übringen Merckwürdigkeiten* (St Petersburg, 1776–80); Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811), *Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des russischen Reiches*, 3 vols. (Graz: Akademische Druck und Verlagsanstalt, 1967 [Reprint of Saint-Petersbourg' edition, 1771–1776]; *Voyages de M. P. S. Pallas en différentes provinces de l'empire de Russie et dans l'Asie septentrionale*, trans. G. de La Peyronie (Paris: Maradan, s.d.). Presentation of these accounts by Ronald Hutton, *Shamans. Siberian Spirituality and the Western Imagination* (London & New York, 2001), chapter 4 "The Records of Shamanism," 29–44.

systems, has been transformed as a result of ecological, political, social and economic factors.

### Two Antinomical Religious Universes

The word shamanism is formed from *saman*, which, in the language of the Tungusic peoples of Eastern Siberia, means a figure who mediates between the world of men and the world of spirits, acting as a soothsayer, healer, and sorcerer. The term was adopted by the Russians and then appeared in Western languages in 1699. The *Encyclopaedia* of Diderot and d'Alembert has an entry on the shamans and describes them as greedy impostors abusing "ignorant and superstitious people." In their society, shamans have an exclusive right on dialogue with the spirits and interaction with them. Siberian shamanism, linked to the hunting life, applies "a symbolic construction that makes it possible to tap nature's resources"<sup>2</sup> and in which the principle of alliance and exchange with animal spirits is crucial.

In the Qur'ān, by contrast, the word Islam means submission and self-abnegation to one sole transcendent and all-powerful God. The Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad further emphasized this submission to the deity, which manifests itself through prescribed cultural practices—the five pillars of Islam—and charitable works (*al-khayrāt*). Islam is based on a written corpus, the Qur'ān and the Sunna, from which derives Shari'a, the Islamic religious law which all believers are bound to respect. The Shari'a establishes the Muslim's duties to God and codifies the relations between men. There is nothing of the sort in shamanism. Shamanistic practice, based on the establishment of a personal relationship or a direct contact with the spirits, cannot be fixated in writing.<sup>3</sup> As a result, shamanism, unlike Islam, knows nothing of dogma, official religious functionaries, or places of worship. A relationship with a deity is foreign to its representational system.

The dissimilarity between shamanism and Islam is thus manifest. Various beliefs and practices, often banished from official Islam, nevertheless present similarities with those of shamanism. Spirits are a case in point. In shamanism, supernatural agents, called "spirits," are connected to the beings and things that they inhabit. The spirits therefore have a status equivalent to that of the soul that resides within the human body, and this renders direct contact with

2 Roberte Hamayon, "Chamanisme, bouddhisme, héroïsme épique: quel support d'identité pour les Bouriates post-soviétiques?" *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 27 (1996): 338.

3 Roberte Hamayon, "Postface," in *Chamanes et chamanisme*, *Diogène* 158 (1992): 159.

them possible and allows man to act on them. One can thus draw a parallel between the *jinn* in Islam and the spirits in shamanism. The *jinn*, attested in the Qurʾān, are intelligent corporeal beings formed of vapour or flame whom our senses cannot detect. Some *jinn* are believed to take an animal form; they can reward or punish humans, and deal with them in multiple forms, so much so that their legal status was debated and settled. Various works of popular medicine recommend ways of forcing them to perform talismanic services. Magic and divination too received the seal of respectability from scholars in the religious sciences, on the basis of the esoteric knowledge revealed to God's messengers. Magic, based on mastery of the *jinn*, was attributed to Solomon.

### The Absence of Shamanism in Islamic Heresiography

From the first centuries of Islam, Muslims have shown great interest in the neighbouring religions. Many *sura* of the Qurʾān speak of the Arab polytheists, the Jews and the Christians. Islam was born and developed in a multi-religious world, the Jews and the Christians. Islam was born and developed in a multi-religious world that represents not only "its sociological background but its real doctrinal point of reference."<sup>4</sup> For this reason Islam traditionally defines itself by reference to other religions. After the Islamic conquests, the Arabs came into contact with most of the great religions then in existence. Within *dār al-islām* itself, the Muslims lived side by side with Mazdean and Manichean communities, the scholars of the Jewish academies of Babylon, and the patriarchs of prestigious centres of Christianity such as Edessa, Antioch and Seleucia. On the Empire's eastern extremes, they encountered Hinduism, Buddhism and shamanism.

The Muslims did not, however, view all religions in the same light. In the Qurʾān, the term *ahl al-Kitāb* (people of the Book) designates those communities whom the one God had favoured with a written revelation: the Jews and Christians. Shariʿa granted the people of the Book a privileged status, that of protected (*dhimma*). The followers of other religions, called associationists (*mushrikūn*), have no right to exist: the choice they are offered is either conversion—or from the viewpoint of the revealed religions, the return to God (*tawba*)—, death or slavery. In the eyes of Islam, their practices have no form: "God alone can give form to a religion."<sup>5</sup> Several categories of idolaters are distinguished by the Muslim heresiographers: those of the Arabian peninsula,

4 Guy Monnot, *Islam et religions* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1986), 13.

5 Guy Monnot, *Islam et religions*, 113.

of sub-Saharan Africa, *Bilād al-sūdān*, a term which refers to the sub-Saharan savannah extending from the Nile to the Atlantic, and the Hindus, who live in the land of idols *par excellence*, India.<sup>6</sup> Between the people of the Book and the idolaters, Islam also found a place for the religions of a “pseudo-book,” in other words the group of dualistic religions (*thanawiyya* or *ahl al-ithnayn*).<sup>7</sup> One would expect to see shamanists classified among the idolaters, but they are not even mentioned by the authors of the heresiographical treatises.

### Central and Septentrional Asia: A Point of Contact between Islam and Shamanism

The first contacts between shamanism and Islam took place when the Arabs formed an alliance with the Turks against the Chinese, who were crushed at Talas in 751. It is hard to trace the history of these contacts, as sources give no indications as to the belief systems and religious practices. Robert de Clari, for example, reports that the Cumans (the Qipchāq Turks) worship the first animal that they come across each morning,<sup>8</sup> a claim which may be interpreted as a reference to the animal-based symbolic system found in shamanism. John of Plano Carpini writes of the Tatars that they “pay great heed to predictions, auguries, magical practices and sorcery, and as the demons answer them, they believe that God is speaking to them. This God is called Itoga,<sup>9</sup> but the Cumans call him *kam* (Turkic, *qām*).”<sup>10</sup> The earliest attestation of the word *qām* is found in the Chinese sources, which are among the most valuable concerning the Turks.<sup>11</sup> In the Annals of the T’ang dynasty (618–906), it is stated that the Kirghizs called their shamans *qām*.<sup>12</sup> Maḥmūd al-Kashgharī, in his Turkic-

6 Guy Monnot, *Islam et religions*, 114. Hinduism is referred to as *madhhab al-barāhima*, the doctrine of the Brahmins; Buddhism as *aṣḥāb al-Bodd*, the partisans of Buddha.

7 The expression “the holders of a pseudo-book” (*man la-hu shuhbat Kitāb*) is that of al-Shahrastānī who, in line with the custom of the theologians and encyclopedists, deals with the Mazdeans, Mazdakians and Manicheans side by side, see Guy Monnot, *Islam et religions*, 119.

8 Peter B. Golden, “Religion Among the Qipchaqs of Medieval Eurasia,” 205.

9 Here, the Latin term Itoga corresponds to Etügen, which designates the Earth-deity. This name, in his various forms, is the name of the holy mountains and ancestral land of the Turks. On Etügen, see Paul Pelliot, *Recherches sur chrétiens d’Asie centrale et d’Extrême-Orient* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1973), 26; Igor de Rachewiltz, “Heaven, Earth and the Mongols,” 132.

10 John A. Boyle, “Turkish and Mongol Shamanism in the Middle Ages,” *Folklore* 83 (1972): 179.

11 The word *qām* is issued from the Tungusic root *sama*.

12 John A. Boyle, “Turkish and Mongol Shamanism in the Middle Ages,” 180.

Arabic lexicon compiled in the second half of the eleventh century, gives as the equivalent of *qām* the word *kāhin*, which in Arabic means a soothsayer. The term *qām* also appears in a Mamluk-Qipchāq dictionary, *Kitāb al-idrāk li-lisān al-atrāk*, composed by the grammarian and theologian Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī, where it is translated as *ṭabīb*, physician.<sup>13</sup> These Arab terms emphasize on two of the shaman's functions: divination and healing.

The statement of William of Rubruc is the best source of information on shamanism among medieval Mongols. We must however be aware that he gives his own perception of their religious practices. He says for example: "Their soothsayers (*divini*) are their priests, many of them have a chief, a sort of pontiff, who regularly sets up his quarters in front of Mangu Chan's principal dwelling, at a stone's throw distance."<sup>14</sup> But this material on shamans constitutes a valuable source in an area where narratives are notoriously problematic.<sup>15</sup> According to William of Rubruc, much of their religious observance derived from ancestor-worship and centred on contact with the spirits of the dead. He describes the images of ancestors (*ongon*), which were kept in the family's tents and carried around in wagons.<sup>16</sup> The supervision of these images was one of the shamans' specific concerns.<sup>17</sup> From the whole chapter xxxv we learn that their function includes prophecy, exorcism, the conduct of festivals, and changing the weather. The Mongol rulers manifested a heavy dependence upon shamans and fortune-tellers. Shamanistic activities were geared to influencing conditions in this life, not to securing an afterlife.<sup>18</sup> The respect in which religious specialists were held was related not just "to the efficacy of their prayers but to expertise in magic, healing and the prolongation of the life."<sup>19</sup> Peter Jackson points out that with one exception the Mongolian lexicon recognized "only religious *specialists* and contained no word for the respective religious community *en masse*."<sup>20</sup>

13 Robert Ermers, *Arabic Grammar of Turkic. The Arabic Linguistic Model Applied to Foreign Languages. A Translation of Abū Ḥayyān al-Andalusī's Kitāb al-Idrāk li-lisān al-Atrāk* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 24–28.

14 *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, chapter xxxv, 1, 240.

15 *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, chapter xxv, 9–10, 156; chapter xxxv, 240–245; Peter Jackson, "Introduction," 49.

16 *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, chapter II, 6–8.

17 *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, chapter xxv, 9–10.

18 Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," 255.

19 Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," 278.

20 The exception was for the Muslims with two words: *sarta'ul*, for the Kh<sup>w</sup>ārazm-Shāh's subjects and *dashman*, which denoted the Muslim religious, Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," 256.

The contacts between Muslim and shamanistic communities were stimulated by the formation of steppe empires. These tribal confederations, paradoxically, led to the Islamization of Central Asia where spread various practices apparently combining Muslim and shamanistic characteristics. Today, the holy men of Islam can serve to legitimize shamans, while remaining the object of veneration by Muslims. Examples of the apparent interpenetration of Islam and shamanism have been observed in Central Asia. Interpreting these religious phenomena is, however, a delicate matter. Should we speak of an Islamized shamanism, of a shamanized Islam, or of an interpenetration of shamanism and Islam? Further light can be shed on this question by considering some apparently similar practices lying in certain rites of Sufism, or on the fringes of Islam.

### The Evolution of the Shaman's Role

The study of the ritual life of the peoples of the Siberian forest has resulted in a definition of shamanism as a symbolic system encompassing material life, social organization and the religious representations of society.<sup>21</sup> Siberian shamanism is based on the principle of an exchange between two worlds: humans feed on game, while the wild animal spirits consume the humans' vital force. Just as humans have a soul, game animals have a "spiritual component that animates their body."<sup>22</sup> The exchange between these two worlds finds its expression in an alliance with the animal spirits on the model of the marital exchange. The shaman periodically renews this alliance in the name of the community through a ritual that represents his marriage to a daughter of the forest spirit, provider of game.<sup>23</sup>

In Central Asia as in Siberia, the transition from a form of shamanism associated to hunting, to a form associated with livestock rearing brought about profound changes in the representational system.<sup>24</sup> The shaman's communal role—obtaining game or good fortune in the hunt<sup>25</sup>—has in most cases disap-

21 Philippe Sagant, "De la chasse à l'élevage," *L'Homme* 138 (1996): 127.

22 Roberte Hamayon, "Le sens de l'alliance," 27.

23 Roberte Hamayon, "Pragmatisme et ritualisation dans le chamanisme," in *Essais sur le rituel II*, eds. A.-M. Blondeau and K. Schipper (Leuven-Paris: Peters, 1988), 156.

24 See Roberte Hamayon, "De la 'chance' à la 'grâce' ou des différents types de charisme chamanique en Sibérie," in *Les autorités religieuses entre charisme et hiérarchie. Approches comparatives*, ed. D. Aigle (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 215–226.

25 Roberte Hamayon, "Pragmatisme et ritualisation," 155.

peared in favour of private, remunerated rites such as divination and the care of ailments. In the form of shamanism associated with livestock rearing, relationships are imagined on the basis of generational descent, just as in real life it becomes necessary to pass property and herds on from a generation to the next. Although access to the role of shaman is still preceded by the “initiator illness,” thus displaying its elective nature, there now exist “lines” of hereditary shamans. Indeed, the idea that the ancestors choose their successors has taken firm root, even though initiation into the role sometimes also occurs via the tomb of a Muslim holy man.

In the urban environment, shamanism has now become a means of subsistence, leading to conflicts between shamans and other holders of magical powers. There usually are two types of *thaumaturges* to be found: shamans, who provide treatment with the help of the spirits, and the guardians of saints’ tombs, who provide treatment thanks to the power bestowed to them by the holy man lying beneath the earth. While shamans were traditionally attached to a well-defined area and community, some of them, in regions suffering great economic hardships such as Kirghizstan and southern Kazakhstan, take advantage of the summer months to move about and extend their influence far afield.<sup>26</sup>

The terminology used to refer to the shaman corresponds to the evolution of his role in society. In the Mongol languages, the shaman is designated by the word *bööv*, which also means one who struggles, an athlete, strong, robust.<sup>27</sup> The equivalent terms in Tungusic, *saman*, and Yakut, *ojun*, are cognate with verbal roots that, referring to the animal vocabulary, mean to move the hooves or the lower part of the body, and, in a ritual context, mean to dance, leap

26 See Patrick Garrone, *Chamanisme et islam en Asie centrale* (Paris: Jean Maisonneuve, 2000); “Aperçu du chamanisme islamisé d’Asie centrale post-soviétique,” in *La politique des esprits. Chamanisme et religions universalistes*, eds. D. Aigle, B. Brac de la Perrière and J.-P. Chaumeil (Nanterre: Collection ethnologie, 2000), 371–381; Thierry Zarcone, “Interpénétration du soufisme et du chamanisme dans l’aire turque. Chamanisme soufisé et soufisme chamanisé,” in *ibid.*, 383–389; *Shamanism and Islam. Sufism, Healing Rituals and Spirits in the Muslim World*, eds. Th. Zarcone and A. Hobart (London: Tauris, 2013). On shamans’ women in Central Asia, see Habiba Fathi, *Femmes d’autorité dans l’Asie centrale contemporaine. Quête des ancêtres et recompositions identitaires dans l’islam post-soviétique* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 2004); “Sainteté et autorité dans l’Asie centrale post-soviétique. Le rôle des femmes de religion en islam,” in *Les autorités religieuses entre charisme et hiérarchie*, 189–213; Razia Sultanova, *From Shamanism to Sufism—Women, Islam and Culture in Central Asia* (London & New York: Tauris, 2011).

27 On this word, see Roberte Hamayon, *La chasse à l’âme. Esquisse d’une théorie du chamanisme sibérien* (Nanterre: Société d’ethnologie, 1990), 142, 506.



or play.<sup>28</sup> As we have seen above, in the medieval sources we find the Turkic word *qām* and its Arabic equivalents (*kāhin*, *ṭabīb*). In the Mongol period, ‘Atā’ Mālik al-Juwaynī wrote that the *qām* were experts in the sciences of magic and treating illnesses.<sup>29</sup> At this time, the word *bakhshi*, designated a Buddhist lama or scholar.<sup>30</sup> But the difficulty was that *bakhshi* were sometimes linked with *qāmān* (i.e. shaman) and possibly confused with *bakhshi*, a lama.<sup>31</sup> One day, during a violent storm, several companions of Öljeitü were killed by thunder. They told him that he should do ritual washings according to the ancient customs of Genghis Khan by passing through between two fires (*qawā'id-i sābiq wa yāsāq-i Jinkizkhān tū-rā bar ātash mi-bāyad gudhasht*); two *bakhsi* were sent to supervise the ceremony.<sup>32</sup> Here the *bakhsi* were probably shamans rather than lamas.

Today, in many Turkic countries of Inner Asia, the term *bakhshi* is generally used to refer to the shaman and to the bard as well, while the Turkish *qām* has been replaced by other terms. In Persian, for example, *fālbīn* is used for fortune-tellers and *parīkhwān* for those who call on spirits, in other words magicians. The term *emchi*, formed from Central Asian Turkic *em*, remedy and *chi*, “he who practises,” is also used. All these words thus refer to functions currently performed by shamans. But, while the shaman is today referred to by a great variety of terms, the expression used for his ritual action still evokes the idea of playing and leaping.<sup>33</sup>

The shaman’s retreat to a private role does not simply imply a retreat of traditional shamanism, but also a shift in symbolism, as is particularly suggested by the increasing feminization of the role. Certainly, alliance and exchange with animal spirits do not allow any role for women as shamans.<sup>34</sup> As women, they can neither kill game, nor marry a spirit woman. It is therefore in connection with human spirits, proceeding from the souls of the dead, that women can engage in shamanistic practices. Often the spirits in question are people who suffered a tragic life or death: “the irregular dead, compared to the regular

28 Roberte Hamayon, *La chasse à l'âme*, 142.

29 John A. Boyle, “Turkish and Mongol Shamanism,” 179.

30 This word is used to refer to a scribe of the Uyghur script, or a religious specialist, not necessarily in Buddhism, but in an indigenous tradition. The older sense of *bakhshi* comes from the Chinese *po-shih/boshi* “holder of a higher diploma,” whence “master.” But the word *bakhshi* is from Sanskrit origin.

31 Peter Jackson, “Bakši,” *Elr* III:536.

32 Qashāni, *Tārikh-i Ūljaytū*, ed. M. Hambly (Tehran, 1969), 98.

33 See Patrick Garrone, *Chamanisme et islam*, 9–39.

34 Roberte Hamayon, “Le sens de l’alliance,” 33.

dead who are the ancestors.”<sup>35</sup> The functions open to women are private and remunerated: healing and divination. This evolution results in a convergence with certain forms of folk Islam, such as the cult of Muslim saints.

This evolution in shamanism affects collective practices. In Kirghizstan, a shamanistic ritual (*bakhshylyk*), practiced by a community of women, seems to be turning into a “possession cult with a feminine and protest character.”<sup>36</sup> All the women present had been called to the position of shaman by an initiatory illness, but only one of them, the most important female shaman, controlled the “trance” of the others. Once again, a convergence with Islam is evident: this community of women shamans has adopted the dominant social model, that of the shaykh of the Sufi brotherhood.

### Islam and the Animal Symbolism of Shamanism

Man’s relationship with the animal world is at the heart of shamanism. In its Siberian form, the shaman’s function is to influence the outcome of the hunt. The alliance with an animal spirit is the basis of the wild and spontaneous aspect of his ritual behaviour. Most of the movements that the shaman carries out, as well as the sounds he produces and the costumes he wears, draw their inspiration from an animal model, whose mating and fighting activities he must imitate.

It must be emphasized that animals have an important place in the Islamic tradition too: they are bearers of meaning, and are used as an example. Six *sura* of the Qur’ān bear the names of animals, and, moreover, understanding their language is the peak of wisdom. Animals are a real presence in Islamic hagiography.<sup>37</sup> A number of animal miracles appear in the typologies established by the Islamic authors themselves, such as Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh al-Iskandarī

35 Roberte Hamayon, “Le sens de l’alliance,” 34.

36 Patrick Garrone, “Aperçu du chamanisme islamisé,” 378.

37 See Denise Aigle, “Charismes et rôle social des saints dans l’hagiographie médiévale persane,” *BEO* 47 (1995): 15–36; Devin DeWeese, “Dogs Saints and Dogs Shirines in Kubravī Tradition. Notes on an Hagiographical Motif of Khwarāzm,” in *Miracle et karāma*, ed. D. Aigle (Turnhout: Brepols, 2000), 459–497; Th. Zarccone, “Le brame du saint: de la prouesse du chamane au miracle du soufi,” in *ibid.*, 413–433; Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, “Miracles des saints musulmans et règne animal,” in *ibid.*, 577–606; “Les animaux, les prophètes et les saints,” in H. Benkheira, C. Mayeur-Jaouen and J. Sublet, *L’Animal en islam* (Paris: Les Indes savantes, 2005), 139–166.

(d. 1301), al-Yāfi‘ī (d. 1367) and Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī (d. 1369).<sup>38</sup> The saint speaks an animal language, he wins the obedience of wild beasts, and he “turns into an animal” (*taṭawwur*). A disciple of the Moroccan saint Abū Mahdī reports the following account of his master and a companion: “I saw them jumping along the ground like two heavy cranes [...] and they continued to rise up until they disappeared.”<sup>39</sup> *Taṭawwur* corresponded to an advanced level of holiness: the saint becomes exemplary “in the form of an animal” or “like an animal.” The saint’s metamorphosis into an animal has its origin in the ancient belief in the temporary or permanent transformation (*mashk*) of humans into animals, pigs or monkeys, of which an echo can be found in the Qurʾān.<sup>40</sup> In the Qurʾānic text, these metamorphoses have a negative aspect linked to divine punishment.<sup>41</sup> The animals that saints turn into vary from one cultural area to another. In North Africa, for example, a saint may change into one of a limited number of animals that bear a *baraka* and are considered to be noble: lion, bird, horse, camel or crane. In Turkic world saints often turn into stags or common cranes (*turna*). The latter is considered by the Bektashis, a Sufi order originating in Central Asia, to be the symbol of the sun’s renewal. But it is difficult to see these saints’ transformations into animals as an influence of shamanistic substrate. The profound meaning of miracles carried out in animal form, or with animals, is to signify that in contact with the animal kingdom the Muslim saint reveals the order of the world.<sup>42</sup>

An animal dance (*raqs*), imitating the crane’s steps and cries, is practiced by the Bektashis of Anatolia. One might at first sight draw a parallel between the Bektashi dance and that of the shaman seeking his ritual bride. My personal

38 See Richard Gramlich, *Die Wunder der Freunde Gottes. Theologien und Erscheinungsformen der Islam-Heiligenwunders* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1987). Unfortunately the author gives no interpretation of these miracles. For a comparative analysis of typologies in Christianity and Islam, see Denise Aigle, “Les miracles dans l’islam médiéval: des classifications des hagiographes aux typologies des historiens,” in *Santità, culti, agiografia. La storiografia degli ultimi vent’anni e le prospettive di ricerca*, ed. S. Boesch-Gajano (Rome: Terza Università degli Studi di Roma, 1997), 51–78.

39 Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, “L’animal exemplaire dans les récits de miracles en Islam,” in *L’animal exemplaire au Moyen Âge V<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles*, eds. J. Berlioz and M.-A. Polo de Beaulieu (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 1999), 92.

40 Qurʾān 5:60–65; 7:166; 21:61–65.

41 See Charles Pellat, “Mashk,” *EI<sup>2</sup>* vi:725–727. This punitive metamorphosis had a Jewish and Christian backgrounds, see Uri Ruvin, “Apes, Pigs, and the Islamic Identity,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 17 (1997): 89–105.

42 On this question, see Catherine Mayeur-Jaouen, “Les animaux, les prophètes et les saints,” 142–153.

view, however, is that this dance is more likely to be related to the *samāʿ*. This Sufi devotional practice can induce states of grace (*aḥwāl*) or ecstasy (*wajd*), and even the unveiling of divine mysteries (*asrār*). These manifestations are accompanied by individual or group movements and dances, which may be codified or not. The *samāʿ* is considered by the Sufis to be a ladder leading to heaven, a means of proclaiming the glory of God. The Bektashis use an element of shamanism, the behaviour of the shaman who becomes animal-like during the ritual, but to different ends and giving it a meaning on a transcendental plane, that is, the search for contact with God.

Like many Muslim holy men, renowned for their journeys in animal form, Aḥmad Yasawī enjoyed the ability to travel from one region of Central Asia to another “turning into a crane,” in accordance with the shamanistic mode of travel. But to focus on the forms only and ignore the intellectual and symbolic process at work in that new infusion of meaning is to miss what is important and instructive about these phenomena. In the Muslim context, this ability to change shape, considered as one of the charismas (*karāmāt*) of Muslim saints, also evokes the celestial ascension (*miʿrāj*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, which was itself, perhaps, inspired by the idea of the journey, latent in the animist and shamanistic imagination. The hagiographic stories involving animals thus seek to give a meaning to the new world defined by Islam through a popular internalization of symbolism from an archaic stock.

### Divination, Talismans and Healing Rites

Along with his community role of ensuring the vital exchange with the animal world through the collective ritual of renewal, the shaman also performed further functions in a private capacity, in particular divination and healing. Various objects and talismans thus formed part of his equipment. In his work on religious practices in Kazakhstan, Basilov put forward the hypothesis that, as Islam had fought against the shaman’s traditional instruments, these had been replaced by the objects of Muslim devotion—the Qurʾān, rosary and prayer mat.<sup>43</sup> The interpretation of soothsaying and healing rites is, for this reason, a delicate matter. Are these indeed shamanism-inspired practices that make use of sacred Muslim symbols, or are they on the contrary variants of magical practices attested across the Muslim world?

43 Vladimir N. Basilov, *Shamanstvo u narodov Srednej Azii i Kasahstana* (Moskva: Nauka, 1992), 84.

The Islamic tradition was from a very early period conscious of the connection between the soothsayer (*kāhin*) and the prophet (*nabī*): “both of them seek enlightenment and inspiration from the deity; both of them are his confidants.”<sup>44</sup> Muḥammad himself experienced difficulties making it understood that what he was doing was different from what the soothsayer did. We find a hint of this in several *sura* of the Qurʾān: “It is the speech of a noble Messenger. It is not the speech of a poet (*shāʿir*), little do you believe, nor the speech of a soothsayer (*kāhin*), little do you remember. A sending down from the Lord of all Beings.”<sup>45</sup> The Prophet recognized that the soothsayer received his knowledge from a spirit, by “possession,” or rather through a personal relationship with a *jinn*, who spies on what is happening in heaven and communicates it to his confidant.<sup>46</sup> Since prophecy is conceived as an extension of soothsaying, but considered to be a superior state of it, certain soothsaying ideas and procedures have retained some of their prestige among the Islamic community and, for this reason, belief in the powers of angels, demons and *jinn* has persisted in Islam.

The study carried out by Vladimir Basilov in Uzbekistan with a woman shaman is a revealing example of the integration, in the practices she used, of heterogeneous elements of shamanistic and Islamic origin.<sup>47</sup> Malika-Apa was considered a healer. She used the shaman’s traditional accessories, the drum and whip, but also Arabic books, a prayer mat and a rosary, all decidedly Muslim objects. Like the soothsayers and sorcerers of pre-Islamic Arabia, Malika-Apa used the poetic form to communicate with the spirits, in this case poems of Persian mystical inspiration. In these lyrical writings, ‘Alī is omnipresent and we find all the traditional imagery of Iranian Sufism. In this region so strongly influenced by Persian culture, the spirits invoked are not *jinn* but female spirits (*parī*), originating with the *pairikā* of the Avesta who were a class of supernatural malignant female beings who sought to tempt mankind. In the Islamic period, the *parī* became benevolent spirits who contract marriages with humans. Malika-Apa was in constant contact with these female spirits who dictated her behaviour, instructing her to neither fast nor pray. The question of whether, Malika-Apa was an “unislamized” Muslim or rather was using Islam for the purpose of a shamanistic function is hard to answer.

The repetition of the name of God (*dhikr*) is a common form of prayer among Muslim mystics and has given rise, in Central Asia, to some peculiar

44 Toufic Fahd, *La divination arabe* (Paris: Sindbad, 1987), 64.

45 Qurʾān 69:40–44.

46 Toufic Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 66.

47 Vladimir N. Basilov, “Malika-Apa, Peripheral Forms of Shamanism? An Exemple from Middle Asia,” in *La politique des esprits*, 361–369.

practices. According to Vladimir Basilov, the *dhikr* arrived in the Kazakh region in the early twentieth century. It was used to drive out evil spirits. Today, the *dhikr* is one of the main forms of shamanistic rite among the Karakalpak, for whom “shamanistic practice and saying the *dhikr* are one and the same thing.”<sup>48</sup> During *dhikr* rites organized for healing purposes, the name of God is repeated along with various formulae and prayers in Arabic. Moreover, the *dhikr* is carried out facing Mecca.<sup>49</sup> Here, it seems that practices of shamanistic origin have become joined to Muslim folk piety. Names of God and Qur’ān are part of Islamic tradition: copying a verse of the Qur’ān for use as a talisman is well-attested in Islam. This belief has its basis in the Qur’ān: “To God belong the Names Most Beautiful; so call Him by them, and leave those who blaspheme His Names, they shall assuredly be recompensed for the things they did.”<sup>50</sup> Knowledge of the virtues of the divine names and of prayers is considered a science in itself (*‘ilm al-khawāṣ*), just as is knowing how to summon spirits (*‘ilm al-istiḥḍār*).<sup>51</sup>

A healing rite performed during a *dhikr* session in Kazakhstan comes closer to a true shamanistic ritual, even though Islamic elements are included.<sup>52</sup> The rite begins at twilight, ending at daybreak, as in nomadic tradition. The day before, the participants in the healing rite are purified in a steam bath. Upon entering the place where the *dhikr* is to be performed, the participants carry out the gestures of the ritual ablutions before prayer. The substance used is not water but the smoke released by plants that the shaman has prepared, which are burning in a container. The rite takes place in two distinct phases. The first is practically an ordinary *dhikr* session: the shaman, like a Sufi master, invokes God and reads the Qur’ān. He wears white clothes and a turban. In the second phase, he changes clothes and starts to gesticulate: the *dhikr* then turns into a shamanistic ritual and is completed with the sacrifice of an animal. The latter is not killed in the name of God and allowed to bleed, as required by Islamic law. Instead, the shaman observes the customary rule for killing an animal in accordance with the Mongol representational system. The heart of the sacrificed animal is torn out in order to preserve its vital force. The animal must be of an appearance contrary to that of the person concerned. If he has a dark skin, it will be white. For the healing operation to work, the balance between two different worlds must be symbolically restored, in accordance with the

48 Vladimir N. Basilov, *Shamanstvo*, 295.

49 Vladimir N. Basilov, *Shamanstvo*, 301.

50 Qur’ān 7:180.

51 Toufic Fahd, *La divination arabe*, 40.

52 Anne-Marie Vuilleminot, “Danses rituelles kazakhes entre soufisme et chamanisme,” in *La politique des esprits*, 356.

principle of hunting shamanism. This healing *dhikr* displays a clear syncretism. The alliance of the shaman with the assistant spirits against the *jinn*, responsible for the illness, is symbolized here by the blood of the sacrificed animal, which is supposed to draw the *jinn* out of the sick man. The animal sacrifice here replaces Holy Scriptures. In Islam the *jinn* are expelled from the sick man by reciting verses of the Qur'ān.<sup>53</sup>

Islam is a religion that sets forth social models and types. In Islamic Central Asia, the shaykh of the Sufi brotherhood appears as a social model, but alongside him a whole cast of additional figures are also recognized by popular consensus: the guardian of the holy man's tomb, the scholar in religious sciences and the shaman. All are recognized for their capacity to mediate between humans, but also with the afterlife and occult forces, thanks to their supernatural powers or their religious knowledge. This is the reason why it is sometimes difficult to distinguish the shaman from the Sufi. It is significant that certain shamans seek recognition from 'ulamā' or holy men to acquire a position. They thus extend their clientele. We can also see the contrary phenomenon: Muslims may take on the role of shaman. It seems that syncretism, arising from the transformation of society and identity in Central Asia, thus affects practices as much as roles.

In contemporary Central Asia, a great variety of religious practices may be observed. It is not, however, easy to make out what is shamanistic and what Islamic, for, in many cases, similar practices are attested in Islam away from any shamanistic context. Despite an apparent doctrinal rigidity, Islam has throughout its history demonstrated a remarkable capacity to integrate outside elements: the flavour of African Islam is different from that of the Islam of India, Indonesia or China. The "pseudo-shamans" who direct the healing *dhikr* rites in Central Asia today do not appear to put into practice the shamanistic system of alliance and exchange with the spirits. Nevertheless, we may see in these rituals an adaptation to the Central Asian religious context, marked by shamanism, of magical practices attested in popular Islam.<sup>54</sup> Denounced in the Soviet period as a backward superstition, shamanism nonetheless seems to have survived in Central Asia under the guise of Sufi Islam. Thus, in the general movement to reassert ancestral traditions, the reference to shamanism is recognized as a component of cultural identity alongside, and sometimes in symbiosis with, the attachment to Islam.

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53 Edmond Doutté, *Magie et religion dans l'Afrique du Nord* (Paris: Jean Maisonneuve, 1984), 221.

54 Emile Dermenghem, *Le culte des saints dans l'Islam maghrébin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1954).

## The Transformation of a Myth of Origins, Genghis Khan and Timur

The heroic figures of Antiquity and of the Bible have long drawn the attention of folklorists, who have established various models. The life of the hero, in the broader sense of the term, is peppered with signs that single him out with respect to from common mortals: miraculous birth; a royal or divine father; a virgin mother; the hero, abandoned as an infant, is saved by an animal; a lofty destiny is predicted for him; he overcomes initiatory trials; he dies an extraordinary death. A great conqueror such as Genghis Khan is indisputably a hero of this type. The founder of an empire, scion of a “golden line” (*altan uruq*), he became a standard model with whom various historians down the centuries sought to link such Muslim sovereigns as Timur and the Mughals of India, as well as non-Muslim rulers such as, for example, Ivan IV. In 1793, Nikolai Novikov reports a letter addressed to the Tsar by the Noghai Mirza Belek Bulat, in which the latter refers to Ivan IV as the “son of Genghis Khan” (*Chingisov syn*).<sup>1</sup> Thus did historiographers reinterpret, to the glory of these distant followers, the now mythical figure of the Mongol conqueror.

Genghis Khan's origin legend is a particularly rich example of the transformations that mythical accounts undergo. The birth of his great forebear, Dobun Mergen, was proclaimed to be supernatural, in line with the model of the heroic figure whose very birth foretells an uncommon destiny. This myth, marked by shamanistic traditions, was copied and gradually transformed. Here, I would like to analyze the tales that include Genghis Khan's origin myth, as they appear in the Mongol and Islamic traditions up to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. I will also examine how the myth's symbolic structure was gradually brought into line with the religious and cultural universes of the conqueror's heirs: the variations and omissions reveal more as to each historiographer's personal approach than do the similarities between different versions of the myth.

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\* This chapter is a revised and very amplified version of a paper published under the title: “Les transformations d'un mythe d'origine: l'exemple de Gengis Khan et de Tamerlan,” in *Figures mythiques des mondes musulmans*, ed. D. Aigle, *REMMM* 89–90 (2000): 151–168.

1 Charles J. Halperin, “Ivan IV and Chinggis Khan,” *Jahrbücher für Geschichte Osteuropas* 1 (2003): 481.



Two Arabic inscriptions in Timur's mausoleum, the Gūr-i Amīr in Samarkand, mention a genealogy that links him to Genghis Khan and his ancestors through a certain Amīr Budhunjar (Dobun Mergen)<sup>2</sup> who is said to have lived in the second half of the tenth century.<sup>3</sup> The first inscription is engraved on the marble of Timur's tomb, located in the crypt, the second on the stone of his cenotaph on the ground floor. Neither inscription is dated, but a rough date can be estimated from the historical context. Timur's grandson, Ulugh Beg, had the stones for the tomb's decoration brought back from East Eurasia in 828/1425. The inscriptions cannot have been engraved before then, that is, any earlier than twenty years after Timur's death.<sup>4</sup>

The inscription on the tomb, the shorter of the two, appears to be incomplete. I have supplied the apparently missing fragments in brackets, on the basis of the second inscription:

No father is known for this illustrious man (*lam yu'raf li-hadhā l-mājid wālid<sup>un</sup>*) but only his mother Alānquwā (Alan Qo'a); it is told that she was not a prostitute (*lam taku baghiyy<sup>an</sup>*) [she was made pregnant (*inna-hā ḥamalāt-hu*)] by the intervention of a ray of light; [it is said that he was one (*wa dhukira anna-hu*)] of the descendants (*min asbāt*) of Asad Allāh al-Ghālib 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.<sup>5</sup>

The second inscription, on the stone of the cenotaph, is more detailed:

No father is known for this illustrious man but only his mother Alānquwā; it is told that she was of a sincere and modest character; she was not a prostitute.<sup>6</sup> She was made pregnant by a ray of light that entered over the top of the door and appeared to her [in the form] of a perfect mortal (*fa tamaththala la-hā bashar<sup>an</sup> sawiyy<sup>an</sup>*) and it is said that he was one of the descendants (*wa dhukira anna-hu min abnā'i*) of Amīr al-Mu'minīn 'Alī b.

2 As the names of the characters in this legend have various spellings depending on the language and authors, I give the original Mongolian names in brackets.

3 These inscriptions were published without analyses by A.A. Semenov, "Nadpisi na nagrobiiakh Timūra i ego potomkov v Gur-i Emire," *Epigrafika Vostoka* 2 (1948): 49–62 and 3 (1949): 45–54. See an analysis of these inscriptions in Ernst Herzfeld, "Alongoa," *Der Islam* 6 (1916): 317–327.

4 John E. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 85.

5 A.A. Semenov, "Nadpisi na nagrobiiakh Timūra," 53.

6 Qur'ān 19:17: "Wee send unto her Our Spirit that presented himself to her a man without fault."

Abī Ṭālib and it may be that her illustrious children verify [the reasons] invoked by their mother (*yuṣaddiqū-hā fī daʿwā-hā*).<sup>7</sup>

We find this genealogical link with Genghis Khan in other Timurid literary sources, but without the reference to ‘Alī which appears only on the tomb inscriptions. The oldest of these is probably a genealogical tree of the Mongols and Bārīās houses in Arabic and Uyghur, composed by one Ḥusayn b. ‘Alī Shāh, perhaps under the patronage of Khalīl Sulṭān (r. 786–814/1384–1411), a grandson of Timur.<sup>8</sup> This genealogy shows the Genghis Khan and Timur’s lineages stem from a common ancestor, Tūminay, who was a scion of Alan Qo’a. But one of the most important sources for the genealogies of the Mongols and Timurids is the *Mu’izz al-ansāb*, a continuation of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Shu’ab-i pan-jgana*, presented to Shāh Rukh in 830/1426–27 by an anonymous author.<sup>9</sup>

To shed light on the origin of this legend and the transformations that it underwent, we must start from the Turkic origin myths.<sup>10</sup> The most ancient account is given in Chinese sources the *Chou Shu*, the annals of the Chou dynasty (556–81), which were completed around 629 at a time when the Chinese were in constant contact with the Turks. The legend may be summarized as follows:

There is no doubt that the Turks are a branch of the Hsiung-nu. They belong to the A-Shih-na clan, an independent tribe; they were totally annihilated by a neighbouring tribe, except for one boy aged ten. Because of his young age, the soldiers could not find the courage to kill him themselves. They cut off his feet and threw him into a pond. A she-wolf fed him meat. The boy grew up and mated with the she-wolf and impregnated her. When he heard that he was still alive, the king who had attacked his tribe sent someone to dispose of him [. . .]. The she-wolf fled to an amphitheatre in the mountains<sup>11</sup> with a grassy plain [. . .]. She gave birth to ten boys. When they grew up they took foreign wives<sup>12</sup> who in turn soon

7 A.A. Semenov, “Nadpisi na nagrobiiakh Timūra,” 57.

8 John E. Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy,” 85.

9 On the literary sources that give this genealogy, see John E. Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy,” 85–86. On *Mu’izz al-ansāb*, see chapter 4.

10 See Denis Sinor, “The Legendary Origin of the Türks,” 223–257.

11 Denis Sinor (“The Legendary Origin,” 246–247) explains that in the Chinese sources *k’u* and *hüeh* refer to tow types of cavern, one of is wich corresponds to an amphitheatre in the mountain.

12 This is an allusion to the principle of exogamy.

became mothers [. . .]. The most skillful of the boys was called A-shih-na. He became their leader. One day, they came out of the mountains.<sup>13</sup>

The Mongols found the Turkic myth alive in East Eurasian and they turned it to their own use. In the *Secret History of the Mongols*, two successive myths are given which probably correspond to a single story:

*At the beginning* there was a blue-grey wolf [Börte Chino], born with is destiny *ordained* by Heaven Above. His wife [Qo'ai Maral] was a fallow doe. They came crossing the Tenggis. After the hald settled at the source of the Onan River on *Mount* Burqan Qaldun, Bataciqan was born to them.<sup>14</sup>

The story of Börte Chino and Qo'ai Maral is followed by a genealogical account which ends with Dobun Mergen's death. The *Secret History* then gives the second myth wich can be summed up as follows:

When Dobun Mergen was no more, his wife Alan Qo'a although without a husband, brought three sons into the world. The two children born to Dobun Mergen secretly said: "See how our mother, without a husband, has brought these other three sons into the world; there was no other man in the tent except Baya'ut, the young servant. The three sons could well be his." One day Alan Qo'a gathered together her elder children and the three young brothers to explain the mystery to them.<sup>15</sup>

In the tale of the Mongol origin, we see again elements of the Turkic myth, in particular the wolf, which has a long history in the belief systems of the peoples living in the Eurasian steppes and in East Eurasia.<sup>16</sup> The myth of the wolf is already attested among the Turks' immediate neighbours, the Wu-sun (end third to early second centuries BC).<sup>17</sup> In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, the *Povest' vremjannyx let*, a Russian chronicle mentions the case of Bonjak, one of the chiefs of the Qipchāq confederation, who, before going into battle, would start howling so as to make contact with his wolf ancestor and gain the

13 Translation from Denis Sinor, "The Legendary Origin," 224–225.

14 *Secret History* § 1 (Italics are from the translator).

15 *Secret History* § 20–21.

16 On the beliefs of the populations living in this cultural area, see Peter B. Golden, "Wolves, Dogs and Qipčaq Religion," 87–97.

17 Peter B. Golden, "Wolves, Dogs and Qipčaq Religion," 90.

latter's assistance in achieving victory. But the wolf as founder-forefather is a rather widespread archetype not only in East Eurasia. In Europe, the best-now example illustrating the wolf cult is Romulus and Remus legend.<sup>18</sup>

In the *Secret History*, the Mongols' great ancestors are designated by the names of symbolic animals. According to Igor de Rachewiltz: "the blue-grey wolf (Börte Chino) and the fallow doe (Qo'ai Maral) in the early legend of Mongol origins are real animals [...]. However, in the later Mongol tradition they became a human couple."<sup>19</sup> Indeed in the shamanic symbolic system, as Roberte Hamayon has written:

the founder of the tribe, who is animal by essence but human by fonction, inasmuch as he begets the forefathers of the clans. He originates from the animal part of the supernatural world and takes a place above the ancestors in the human part of it.<sup>20</sup>

Shamanism is based on a system of exchange between the human and animal worlds, conceived on the model of the matrimonial exchange.<sup>21</sup> Traditionally, the shaman oversaw this exchange. In order to acquire legitimacy for the performance of his task of game, he must ritually "marry the daughter (or sister) of the game-living spirit, so that he can act in the supernatural world as a rightful husband and not as an abductor."<sup>22</sup> He had to be male because, in the system of alliance with the spirits, he occupied the position of "taker of women."<sup>23</sup> This

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18 See Jane DeRos Evans, *The Art of Persuasion. Political Propaganda from Aneas to Brutus* (Ann Arbor, 1992).

19 See commentaires' Igor Rachewiltz in *Secret History* 1:224. On the names of the mythical ancestors of the Mongols, see the linguistic analyses of Tatiana Skrynnikova, "Rivalry Between Mongols And Tayiči'ut For Authority: Kiyat Borjigin Genealogy," in *Representing Power in Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission and the Sacred*, eds. I. Charleux, G. Delaplace, R. Hamayon and S. Pearce (Bellingham, 2010), 131–149.

20 Roberte Hamayon, "Shamanism in Siberia: From Partnership in Supernature to Counterpower in Society," in *Shamanism, History, and State*, ed. C. Humphrey (Ann Arbor, 1994), 83–84.

21 Roberte Hamayon, *La chasse à l'âme*, 25 ff.

22 Roberte Hamayon, "Shamanism in Siberia," 79.

23 When, in the eighteenth century, shamanism began to be supplanted in Mongolia by the spread of Orthodox Christianity and Lamaistic Buddhism, the position of shaman was little by little feminized, see Roberte Hamayon, "Chamanisme et bouddhisme épique: quel support d'identité pour les Bouriates post-soviétiques?" *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 27 (1996): 331.

representational system may explain why, in Mongol myth, the Turkic she-wolf became a he-wolf, and his wife, wild-doe, represented deer, the ideal game.

The second part of the Mongol myth, which seeks to locate these occurrences in a historic period, involves the intervention of a being which takes the form of a dog. The dog, like the wolf, is an animal with an important role in the belief systems of the steppe and East Eurasia. Many origin tales involve a dog ancestor. One Tibetan text dealing with the Uyghurs, for example, mentions that two dogs, the husbands of a sterile she-wolf, abducted and mated with Turkic women who later gave birth to male dogs and to girls.<sup>24</sup> Before Genghis Khan's conquests, the Mongols were in contact with the peoples of the Manchurian forests, with whom they shared many beliefs. The Kitan claimed canine ancestors,<sup>25</sup> while a dog cult is attested among the Jurchen who ruled northern China.<sup>26</sup> Despite the evident presence of a dog cult among these populations, it is hard to deduce from this that the Mongols had an independent dog myth. The dog in the second part of the myth seems to have been a kind of wolf. The symbolism of shamanism seems to have been used in this account to resolve a problem of a social nature—illegitimate birth. But we can see also the concept developed by Lord Raglan, Otto Rank, and others, and called the "Mythic Hero Archetype," a model of life found in many Indo-European and Semitic cultures.<sup>27</sup> The life story of any one hero contains many of, but not all, the twenty-one elements of the archetypal model.

The purpose of this origin myth in vindicating a birth without a known father is also present in the Islamic sources which at the same time seek to conjure away the shamanistic representations that underlie the account given in the *Secret History*. The richest Islamic source for Mongol traditions is Rashīd al-Dīn's *Jāmi' al-tawārīkh*. The writer had access to a great number of oral traditions.<sup>28</sup> Rashīd al-Dīn conveys the legend in a humanized form, depicting Börte Chino and Qo'ai Maral as humans bearing animal names. But the way he

24 Jean-Paul Roux, *La religion des Turcs et des Mongols* (Paris: Payot, 1994), 193–194. He also mentioned other traditions concerning the myth of the dog.

25 Herbert Franke, "The Forest Peoples of Mandchouria: Kitan and Jurchens," 405–406.

26 Peter B. Golden, "Wolves and Dogs and Qipčaq Religion," 47.

27 There is a considerable literature on this subject. J. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1918); L. Raglan [*The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama* (New York: Vintage, 1956)] is interested in the figures of Joseph, Moses and Elias; O. Rank [*The Myth of the Birth of the Hero* (New York: Vintage, 1959)] studied in particular the birth myths of Sargon, Moses, Gilgamesh and Cyrus; J. Campbell [*The Hero With a Thousand Faces* (London: Abacus, 1975)] has constructed a model of the all-encompassing hero.

28 Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 72–90.

speaks of the three sons borne by Alan Qo'a after her husband's death clearly shows that these "illegitimate" births could not readily be accepted. He first of all recounts that Dobun Mergen had a most modest wife, by name Alan Qo'a. She gave him two sons called Bālkūnūt (Belgūnūtei) and Būkūnūt (Bügūnūtei).<sup>29</sup> As for the three other sons, Rashīd al-Dīn writes that opinions differ greatly (*dar ān bāb ikhtilāf bisyār ast*).<sup>30</sup> He then reports Alan Qo'a's explanation:

Yes, every night I dreamt I saw a fawn [-coloured] being.<sup>31</sup> Softly, softly it would draw near to me; slowly, slowly it would leave again<sup>32</sup> [...], these sons, Būqūn Qutaqī (Buqu Qadagi), Būsūn Sālji (Buqatu Salji) and Budhunjar (Bodonchar Mungqaq), came to me in a different way, and that is why they will be great khans (*pādishāh-i khān*).<sup>33</sup>

We may observe that Rasīd al-Dīn's version is very close to that of the *Secret History*, but the yellow dog has become simply a "fawn-coloured being."

In a slightly later Arabic source, the Mamluk historian Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī's (d. 749/1349) *Masālik al-abṣar wa mamālik al-amṣār*, the mother's explanation to her elder sons is given as follows:

I was not made pregnant by anyone (*mā ḥamaltu min aḥad*). I was sitting down; my window was open. A light came in through it, three times. As for me, I was pregnant with these three sons, for that light entered each time with a boy. [They say that] these three sons were conceived in one sole womb (*fī baṭn<sup>in</sup> wāhid*): Būqūn Qūtāghī, Būsūn Sālji and Būdhunjar. They are called *nūrāniyyūn* because of the light that penetrated their mother. That is why Genghis Khan is called the son of the sun (*annahū ibn al-shams*).<sup>34</sup>

Al-'Umarī nevertheless expresses considerable concern as to the credibility of this story. He accuses Alan Qo'a of having made up this explanation to escape

29 Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī, 168.

30 Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī, 168.

31 In Arabic, the adjective *ashqarānī* is used to refer to a chestnut horse or the colour russet, while *ashḥal* is an Arabic adjective meaning fawn-coloured.

32 Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī, 171.

33 Rashīd al-Dīn/Karīmī, 171.

34 Al-'Umarī, *Das Mongolische Weltreich: al-'Umarī's Darstellung der mongolischen Reiche in seinem Werk Masālik al-abṣar wa mamālik al-amṣār*, ed. and trans. K. Lech (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1968), Arabic text, 2–3.

death [by stoning] or, knowing the story of Maryam, of having made use of it to deceive her tribe.<sup>35</sup>

Nearly two centuries after Timur's death, the historiography of Mughal India gave a new interpretation of the Genghis Khan origin legend. Seeking to buttress the Mughal dynasty, the historiographers emphasized the genealogical ties that linked the sovereigns of Mughal India to Timur, and through the latter, to Genghis Khan.<sup>36</sup>

In his *Akbar-nāma*, composed about 1003/1595, Abū l-Faḍl, the official historian of Jalāl al-Dīn Akbar (r. 963–1014/1556–1605), begins his account of the latter's reign with the praise of his glorious ancestors, amongst them Timur who is in turn presented as a descendant of Genghis Khan.<sup>37</sup> The structure of Abū l-Faḍl's text deserves some attention. The passage relating the birth of Budhunjar (Bodonchar Mungqaq) is preceded by a long account of the merits of Alan Qo'a, presented as a woman whose physical and spiritual beauty never ceased to grow, so that she became unequalled for virtue in her time. She was very pious and, alone in her private chamber, would meditate on the One God. Abū l-Faḍl then writes:

One night, this divinely radiant woman was resting on her bed when a glorious light shone a ray into her tent. [The light] entered the mouth and throat of this source of spiritual knowledge (*sarchasma-yi 'irfān*). This cupola of chastity became pregnant by the light, in the same way as Maryam the daughter of 'Imrān (*bar minwāl-i Ḥaḍrat-i Maryam bint 'Imrān ābistan shud*).<sup>38</sup>

Only after he has described Alan Qo'a's miraculous impregnation does Abū l-Faḍl indicate that her husband, Dobun Mergen was no longer in this world when she bore child. The author then discusses the possibility of birth without a father, or without a mother, citing the cases of Adam and, above all, Jesus, born of a virgin mother: "If you have heard the story of Maryam, then believe that of Alan Qo'a likewise" (*ḥikāyat-i Maryam bishinawī bi Alānquwā bigirawī*).<sup>39</sup>

35 Al-'Umarī, Arabic text, 3–4.

36 I. Habib, "Timur in the Political Tradition and Historiography of Mughal India," in *L'Héritage timouride Iran—Asie centrale—Inde xv<sup>e</sup>–xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles*, special issue, *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 3–4 (1997): 299.

37 Abū l-Faḍl-i Mubārak, *The Akbar-Nāma*, ed. Mawlawī 'Abd Ur-Raḥīm (Calcutta, 1875), 64–67.

38 Abū l-Faḍl, 65.

39 Abū l-Faḍl, 67.

The Muslim authors make a number of variations to the *Secret History* and drop the animal reference. But Rashīd al-Dīn and the Mamluk historian al-ʿUmārī leave room to some doubt concerning the legitimacy of Budhunjar's birth. These authors have not reimagined the contents of the myth within an Islamic frame of reference: Genghis Khan, who derived his legitimacy from the world of the steppe, did not need to be presented as the descendant of ancestors who followed a revealed religion. In this, the two authors greatly differ from the Timurid and Mughal chroniclers who were constrained, in order to make Timur's ancestors respectable in Islamic eyes, to give a scriptural basis to their justification of the birth.

The legend of Alan Qo'a aroused the interest of Ernst Herzfeld who discussed and commented on scholars' various interpretations in a 1916 article. Blochet had seen this legend as a straightforward copy of the Gospels while for Ostrūp it was an expression of Mongol religious tolerance and syncretism through Manichaeism.<sup>40</sup> But these interpretations aren't convincing. In the *Secret History*, the miraculous conception of the three sons follows a well-established model of illegitimate birth, justified by an intervention of divine origin which itself is symbolized by light. This model is attested in ancient eastern traditions. The divine sign is supposed to appear at the birth of persons marked for a lofty destiny. The being with the light yellow skin who crawled out like a yellow dog here serves as the symbolic representation of mastery over the real: a birth without a father. The three sons of Alan Qo'a are "sons of Heaven."

The Mongols had long been in contact with Nestorian Christianity, but it is difficult to affirm a Christian influence in the Mongol origin myth. Alan Dundes has compared the life model of the "Mythical hero archetype" with the events in the life of Jesus in Gospel and Christian Scriptures. He found that Jesus' life contained almost all of the twenty-two recurring elements of the model.<sup>41</sup> Genghis Khan's origin legend belongs to a greater model, one found throughout Asiatic traditions and in which the father is rarely mentioned.

Herzfeld himself analysed the inscription on Timur's tomb, on the basis of study of the Gospels and of a philological analysis of Greek and Syriac. According to the great orientalist, the essential features of the legend of Alexander's birth, as reported by Plutarch, influenced the Gospel according to Luke. This model was then taken up by Mongol legend. Lightning, that is, the manifestation of Zeus, fell onto Olympia's belly before her wedding-night with

40 Ernst Herzfeld, "Alongoa," 321.

41 Alan Dundes, "The Hero Pattern and the Life of Jesus," in *In Quest of the Hero*, with an introduction by Robert A. Segal (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 179–223.



Philip.<sup>42</sup> This belief in the divine birth of Alexander was, in Herzfeld's view, spread throughout the East by Hellenism, particularly through the Pseudo-Callisthene's *Alexander Romance*.<sup>43</sup> For all this, can we really speak of this myth's direct influence on Mongol tradition? Alexander was indeed known in Central and Upper Asia, but mainly through a Syriac translation of the Pseudo-Callisthene's *Alexander Romance*.<sup>44</sup> Neither the Greek text of this work nor the Syriac translations mention Alexander's supernatural birth, as transmitted by Plutarch. Nectanebus says to Olympia that the God Ammon will appear to her in a dream and that she will become pregnant by him.<sup>45</sup> It is thus difficult to accept Herzfeld's view that the legend of Alan Qo'a is a replica of Olympia's.

Perhaps, one may discern an influence from the model of the Chinese emperor, according to the specialist of the Yüan, Igor de Rachewiltz. The founder of Chinese unity, the emperor Qui Shihungdi, initiated the use of the word *wang* to refer to sovereignty as this term referred back to the Supreme Being. This amalgam between the divine role and sovereignty had its origins in the conception of the Chinese emperor, who was "son of Heaven" in the strict sense.<sup>46</sup> The cosmological ritual surrounding the cult of Heaven, the Sovereign on high, led to a theory of hypostases of Heaven which extended to a doctrine of the mystical birth of the "son of Heaven." Each dynasty was associated with one of the five hypostases of the heavens through ties of consanguinity with the legendary emperors who were themselves inserted into the list of celestial hypostases. Given the close links between the Mongol and Chinese worlds, one may imagine that Genghis Khan's origin legend inherited something from the Chinese imperial model, but not only.<sup>47</sup>

A different question arose regarding Timur, a Muslim ruler whose legitimacy depended on both Islam and his ties to Genghis Khan. The Muslim histo-

42 Plutarque, *La vie d'Alexandre. Sur la Fortune ou la Vertu d'Alexandre*, trans. R. Facelière and E. Chambry (Paris: Autrement, 1993), 8.

43 On the Pseudo-Callisthène, see Andrew R. Anderson, *Alexander's Gate, Gog and Magog, and the Inclosed Nations* (Cambridge, Mass., 1932); K. Czeplédy, "The Syriac Legend Concerning Alexander the Great," *AOASH* 7/2-3 (1957): 231-249.

44 See Ernst A. Wallis Budge (ed. and trans.), *The History of Alexander, Being the Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Callisthene* (Cambridge, 1889).

45 Ernst Herzfeld, "Alongoa," 323.

46 We find the titles T'ien wang (King by grace of the Heavens) and T'ien tseu (Son of the Heavens), see Léon Vandermeersch, *Wangdao ou la voie royale. Recherches sur l'esprit des institutions dans la Chine archaïque*, 2 vols., *Structures politiques, Les rites* (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 1980) 2:370.

47 See Chen Sanping, "Son of Heaven and Son of God: Interactions Among Ancient Asiatic Cultures Regarding Sacral Kingship and Theophoric Names," 289-325.

riographers, on the basis of the Qur'ānic exegesis, naturally saw the similarities between Jesus' birth and the story of Alan Qo'a. Mary, the mother of Jesus, is cited several times in the Qur'ān. Indeed, one entire *sura* is dedicated to her. I have noted above that two Qur'ānic fragments are included in the inscriptions on Timur's tomb: God sends his spirit to Alan Qo'a in the shape of a "perfect mortal;"<sup>48</sup> she is not a "prostitute."<sup>49</sup> The Qur'ān does not name the spirit of God that visits Mary, but Islamic tradition identifies it with the Abrahamic Holy Spirit. The latter announces to her that the Lord wished to make the child a sign to men.<sup>50</sup> The conception of Jesus, whose birth is considered by Muslim tradition to have been as miraculous as Adam's, is the result of a divine decree.<sup>51</sup> In order to give an Islamic colouring to the fatherless birth of Genghis Khan's ancestor, the author of the mausoleum inscriptions had recourse to this tradition.

The reference in Timur's lineage to 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib remains to be explained. In these inscriptions, a perfect mortal, the descendant of 'Alī, has taken the place of the yellow dog of the Mongol tradition. The explanation for the choice of 'Alī in Timur's genealogy lies in the personality of the fourth caliph, who, from the ninth or tenth century on, was considered by Muslim tradition as both a fighter and a sage. He appears as the model of the Islamic hero, fighting only for honorable causes with the greatest magnanimity. 'Alī's lofty deeds were propagated in Persian through Bal'amī's translation of Ṭabarī's *Ta'rikh al-rusul wa-l-mulūk*. A *Alī-nāma*, dating from 482/1089 and composed in the metre of the *Shāh-nāma*, related the episodes of 'Alī's life in epic mode. As Charles-Henri de Fouchécour observes, this text was undoubtedly intended for public recitation so as to encourage the audience to imitate the model it provided. This epic poem on 'Alī, to some degree based on the model of Rustam, the hero of the *Shāh-nāma*, credits him with many battles against the *jinn*s, Iblīs, the Sasanians, dragons and demons, from all of which he emerges victorious.<sup>52</sup> This image of the gallant fighter, magnanimous, generous and devoted to God's cause, also spread in the Turkic-Iranian world. Muslim tradition, furthermore, attributes supernatural powers to 'Alī and considers him to be the holder of a spiritual and esoteric wisdom. Nearly of all the Sufi orders traced their descent

48 Qur'ān 19:17.

49 Qur'ān 19:20.

50 Qur'ān 19:21. Mary had pledged her virginity to God (66:22; 21:91).

51 As to how Christians saw the Islamic view of Jesus's birth, see A. Harrak, "Christianity in the Eyes of the Muslims of the Jazirah at the End of Eighth Century," *Parole de l'Orient* 20 (1995): 347–356. The author makes use of Zuq'nīn's chronicle.

52 Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, *Moralía*, 127–128.

from ‘Alī and, through him, to the Prophet. He was revered in this period as the first saint (*walī*) of Islam.<sup>53</sup> During the reign of Ḥusayn Bāyqarā a ‘Alī’s grave was “discovered” in Balkh. The pilgrimage to it was officially promoted as an “alternative to the hajj to Mecca.”<sup>54</sup>

By establishing a genealogical connection between ‘Alī and Timur the author of the monumental inscriptions gave the Timurid conqueror the image of an ideal Muslim. The reference to ‘Alī, fighter of fair battles and man of magnanimity, could erase the memory of the massacres of Muslims that Timur had perpetrated.<sup>55</sup> Later historiography, without referring to ‘Alī, paints the same picture of Timur as having the cardinal merits of the ideal ruler. He is humble (*ḥalīm*), wise (*ḥakīm*), “loves the descendants of the Prophet” (*sayyid*) and “is immoderate in [respecting] the Sharī‘a.”<sup>56</sup> Furthermore, making Timur a potential heir of ‘Alī’s wisdom and charisma was in line with the image portrayed by his contemporaries. For the Timurid sultan claimed supernatural powers and ascendancy over holy men: Shāh Ni‘matallāh Walī al-Kirmānī was supposedly impressed upon seeing Timur because he saw that behind the latter’s appearance of earthly power lay the manifestation of divine power.<sup>57</sup> In his inscriptions, Timur therefore takes upon himself a double *nasab*, one relating to Genghis Khan and the other to Quraysh. This dual ancestry was in accordance with his role of founder of an empire on Genghis Khan’s model and with the image of the ideal Muslim ruler that the historiographers wished to draw of him and “the aura of something akin to sacral kingship.”<sup>58</sup>

The Mongol origin legend underwent multiple transformations that illustrate the transmission of myths whose material is, by definition, fluid and adaptable to different contexts. The flexibility of this myth is illustrated by the various interpretations given by the historiographers. Furthermore, this origin legend deploys a particularly flexible and adaptable image, the “yellow dog.” The colour yellow can remind of the sun, light, and, finally, in a thoroughly Islamic

53 A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign: Sacred Kingship and Sainthood in Islam* (Columbia, 2012), 40.

54 A. Azfar Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 40.

55 Jean Aubin, “Tamerlan à Bagdad,” *Arabica* 9 (1962): 303–309; “Comment Tamerlan prenait les villes,” *StIsl* 19 (1963): 83–122.

56 Denise Aigle, “Les tableaux dynastiques du *Muntaḥab al-tavāriḥ-i Mu‘īnī*: une originalité dans la tradition historiographique persane,” *StIr* 21/1 (1992): 81.

57 Jean Aubin, *Matériaux pour la biographie de Shāh Ni‘matullah Walī Kirmānī*, ed. J. Aubin (Paris, 1956), 15; Persian text, 43.

58 Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition. Turko-Persian Politics and Acculturation in Medieval Iran* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2007), 13.

context, can be transformed into a replica of the Qur'anic perfect mortal of *sura* Maryam. Thus we have a typical illustration of the different symbolic uses that may be made of the same image, in very different religious systems.

The anthroponomous animals of the first part of the myth have been humanized, as we have seen, since the Mongols came into contact with Islam. Somewhat later, in the seventeenth century, when the official religion of Mongolia became Lamaistic Buddhism, the Mongol chronicles linked Genghis Khan to imaginary Tibetan rulers.<sup>59</sup> In the tales related in these late texts, the subtle animal symbolism of the *Secret History* is greatly reduced: Börte Chino and Qo'ai Maral are, unequivocally, human beings.

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59 In the *Erdeni-yin tobchi* of Saghang Setchen, rediged in 1662, Börte Chino was the youngest of three brothers; he took a young woman called Qo'ai Maral for wife, see Denis Sinor, "The Legendary Origin," 240–241.

## Mongol Law *versus* Islamic Law. Myth and Reality

The figure of Genghis Khan, the pitiless conqueror, is linked to another, that of the legislator. In 1206, we are told he promulgated an extremely harsh legal code, or *yāsā*. The Mongol conquests would become a byword for terror both in the West and in the lands of Islam. These nomads of the steppe, identified with the peoples of Gog and Magog in the Bible and Qurʾān, established a dominion lasting some one hundred and fifty years over lands with a long sedentary tradition. Their rule marked a rupture in the history of Eurasia. It is not surprising, then, that a myth soon formed around the “great *yāsā*”<sup>1</sup> of Genghis Khan which was supposedly imposed on the peoples who fell under his sway.

Mongol law, or more precisely a Mongol political order, certainly existed. What is less certain is whether or not it took the shape of a structured written code. The references to the *yāsā* in the Islamic sources in fact bear witness to the ambiguity of the term in the minds of these writers, who use it to refer to both imperial decrees (Mongolian, *jasaq*) and customary rules (Mongolian, *yosun*).<sup>2</sup> The scholars and researchers who, from the late 17th century on, studied “the great code of Genghis Khan,” adopted the outlook of the Islamic sources, thereby perpetuating up to the present day the misunderstandings of the medieval sources.

As a first step in the present analysis, I will seek to clarify the concept of *yāsā*, distinguishing between its strict meaning in Mongolian and the broader use that the Muslim authors made of it. This implies to examine the origin, nature and chronology of the sources. This consideration of the texts will enable us to explain how an erroneous conception of the *yāsā* became established in the relevant historiography. The second part of our analysis will seek to understand the reasons for the conflict between the *yāsā* and the Sharīʿa, whether that conflict was in fact real or mythical. An analysis of the principles of the *yāsā*, as applied in the context of the Mongol empire, in addition to certain

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\* This chapter is a revised and amplified version of a paper published under the title: “Le ‘grand *yasa*’ de Gengis-khan, l’empire, la culture mongole et la *sharīʿa*,” *JESHO* 47/1 (2004): 31–79.

1 The term appears in several different forms in the Islamic sources: *yasaq*, *jāsāq*, *yāsāq*, *yāsā*. See the entry “Yāsāq” in Doerfer IV:71–82. I have adopted the form *jasaq* when dealing with sources in Classical Mongolian and *yāsā* when dealing with sources in Persian and Arabic, as this is the form most often found in the latter.

2 On this term, see Doerfer I:555–557.

Mongol customary rules which were not understood by the Muslims, shows that the perception of the *yāsā* in the lands of Islam varied over time. As a first step, it is necessary to set out the historical circumstances that contributed to the development of the notion of the great Mongol *yāsā*.

### The Origins of an Error

#### *The Mamluk Sultanate Faced with the Threat of the Ilkhans*

Möngke had charged his brother Hülegü with continuing the Mongol conquests and implementing the customs (*rusūm wa yūsūn*) and law (*yāsā*) of Genghis Khan. He tells him that: “all were to be obedient and loyal to yours orders and prohibitions from the Oxus River until the furthest place in Egypt.”<sup>3</sup> Hülegü’s armies were halted at ‘Ayn Jālūt on 3 September 1260 by the Mamluk sultan Quṭuz.<sup>4</sup> The defeat of the Mongol troops at ‘Ayn Jālūt resulted in two zones of influence being established: the Mamluks controlled the lands of the Levant while, across the Syrian desert, the Ilkhans held Mesopotamia. Throughout this period, the two rival powers engaged in full-scale ideological warfare. In this, the *yāsā* was a major element.

In 1268, the Ilkhan Abaqa sent Baybars a letter in which he explained that the defeat at ‘Ayn Jālūt had been the result of disunity within the imperial family. Now, he said, all the Mongol princes had agreed to implement the orders (*farmān*) and laws (*yāsā*) of Genghis Khan and the Great Khan Qubilai. In his reply to Abaqa, Baybars proclaimed that: “Today the *yāsāh* which we have is greater than the *yāsāh* of Chinggis Khan.”<sup>5</sup> There is no doubt that Baybars here used the term *yāsā* with the meaning of Shari‘a.<sup>6</sup> It is not surprising that these Ilkhanid threats to the Levant should lead the Muslims to see the Mongol *yāsā* as a legal code entirely at odds with Islam, which had remained in effect even after Ghazan Khan’s official conversion to Islam in 1295.

Ghazan Khan, upon his conversion, took the title of *Pādishāh al-islām*, thus appearing as the protector of Islam, but he maintained various aspects Mongol

3 Rashīd al-Dīn/Alizade III:23.

4 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “In the Aftermath of ‘Ayn Jālūt: The Beginnings of the Mamlūk-Īlkhānid Cold War,” *al-Masāq*: 10 (1990): 1–21; “‘Ayn Jālūt Revisited,” *Tarih*: 2 (1992): 119–150.

5 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “An Exchange of Letters in Arabic Between Abaga Īlkhān and Sultan Baybars (A.H. 667/A.D. 1268–69),” *CAJ* 38/1 (1994): 30

6 See the discussion on the meaning of the term *yāsā* in this letter by Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “An Exchange of Letters,” 31; Anne F. Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and Mongols: The Reigns of Baybars and Qalāwūn,” *MSR* 5 (2001): 108–109.

worldview in cultural, legal and ideological matters.<sup>7</sup> Long after his conversion, he participated at the White Festival, the Mongolian New Year celebration.<sup>8</sup> The Persian and Arabic sources nevertheless attest to his attachment to the Mongol *yāsā*. Rashīd al-Dīn reports that he was in the habit of gathering his companions (*atrāb*, pl. of *tirb*) to teach them the customs (*yūsūn*) and the *yāsā*. He had assigned a rank (*martabat*) to everyone: the old (*āqa*), the young (*īnī*), blood brothers (*anda*)<sup>9</sup> and relatives by marriage (*qudāy*).<sup>10</sup> If any of them overstepped the bounds of their rank, they were recalled to the path of the *yāsā*.<sup>11</sup> Ghazan Khan thus respected the classical hierarchy of Mongol society before Genghis Khan, preserved within the framework of the new imperial order. Whatever be the historical accuracy of this passage, Ghazan Khan's devotion to the *yāsā* is presented in a positive light by Rashīd al-Dīn. He is one of the few Persian historians to transmit Ghazan Khan's imperial decrees (*yarlīgh*). According to one of these decrees, he ordered that the Mongol soldiers be granted *iqṭā'*—lands whose use they would enjoy by way of salary.<sup>12</sup> This practice was quite different from the way Genghis Khan's armies had been paid, which was based on distributing booty. The decree begins by praising Genghis Khan's *yāsā*, to which Ghazan Khan attributes the victorious conquests of his predecessors.

The Mamluk sources also emphasize Ghazan Khan's attachment to the *yāsā*. According to al-Ṣafadī, when the Ilkhan came to power he followed Genghis Khan's way of governing (*al-siyāsa*) and established the law of the Mongols (*al-yāsā al-mughūliyya*).<sup>13</sup> By way of casting doubt on the sincerity of Ghazan Khan's conversion, the Mamluk historian denounces his respect for Mongol

7 See Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View From the Mamlūk Sultanate," *BSOAS* LIX/1 (1996): 1–10.

8 Reuven Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement*, 71, see Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 33.

9 An *anda* is a hunting partner or a relative by marriage of equal status, see Roberte Hamayon, *La chasse à l'âme*, 768, n. 9.

10 *Qudāy* is the Persianized form of the Mongolian term *quda*, which means "taker of a wife," "fellow through marriage." It denotes a relative by marriage of unequal status. Its precise meaning, however, is a matter of debate. Doerfer (1:423–425) considers that the term *quda* indicates that the two parties are of equal status.

11 Rashīd al-Dīn/Alizade, 251.

12 On this question, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Turko-Mongolian Nomads and the *Iqṭā'* System in the Islamic Middle East (ca. 1000–1400 AD)," in *Nomads in the Sedentary World*, eds. A.M. Kazanov and A. Wink (Curzon: Curzon-11AS Asian Studies Series, 2001), 159–160.

13 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition: A View From the Mamlūk Sultanate," *BSOAS* LIX/1 (1996): 3–4.

customs. Shortly after his conversion, he married Bulughan Khatun, the widow of his father Arghun, who was pleasing to him. This was possible because the Mongols held that the younger son was obliged to marry his father's widows, apart from his own mother and the mothers of his older brothers. The practice was, however, utterly contrary to the Shari'a. Ghazan Khan would have renounced Islam had an expert in religious science not found a solution to the deadlock. He declared that Bulughan Khatun's previous marriage to Arghun was not valid according to the Shari'a, since Arghun was not a Muslim.<sup>14</sup> Al-Şafadi, with his detailed account of this marriage, implicitly points to the conflict between *yāsā* and Shari'a.

### *The yāsā in the Medieval Sources*

The sources on the *yāsā* are of various kinds and origins, but most of them are from outside Mongol culture. The *yāsā* is mentioned in Persian, Arabic, Syriac and Armenian historiography, as well as in the Latin accounts left by the Franciscan missionaries and as in the Chinese sources. Nevertheless, we have some medieval sources of Mongol cultural origin.

A number of *yāsā* are mentioned in the *Secret History of the Mongols* and in the letters sent by the khans to foreign rulers. The *Secret History* is the only indigenous source that enables us to establish the distinction between imperial decrees, the *jasaq*, and custom, the *yosun*. In the *Secret History*, the term *jasaq* is invariably used to mean the law of a ruler exercising his authority ("Harsh was the law of Gürbesü our queen"),<sup>15</sup> legal precedent, or a rule whose transgression led to a harsh punishment. In Mongolian, the verb *jasaq-la-* means to act according to the law, to administer, to govern;<sup>16</sup> *jasaq* is clearly, therefore, a word relating to the rules for the administration of the state.<sup>17</sup> The term *yosun* appears twenty-two times in the *Secret History*,<sup>18</sup> referring to a way of acting or a custom. The source of the *yosun's* validity is therefore different from that of the *jasaq's*. The *yosun* owes its validity to tradition, while the validity of the *jasaq* lies in the authority of the leader who proclaims the law. The first testimony to the term *yāsā*, apart from the *Secret History*, is in a letter sent by

14 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition," 1–3.

15 *Secret History* § 189.

16 See Ferdinand D. Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1960), "zagala-," 1040.

17 In modern Mongolian, *zasag* means "government."

18 *Secret History* § 9; 56; 96; 110; 116; 117; 139; 147; 150; 164; 177; 180; 216; 241; 244; 263; 270; 272.



Güyük to Pope Innocent IV in 1246. In this document, *yāsā* means an order or decree of the Great Khan.<sup>19</sup>

David Ayalon, the author of a major study of the *yāsā*, has traced the history of the term's appearance in Arabic language Islamic sources and has shown that its use derives, directly or indirectly, from the *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā* of 'Aṭā' Malik al-Juwaynī.<sup>20</sup> Ayalon, however, criticizes al-Juwaynī for his attachment to the Mongol regime and considers his chronicle a largely unreliable source. This criticism is in fact too harsh, especially as regards the information al-Juwaynī provides on the *yāsā*. Of all the Muslim authors, al-Juwaynī best understood what the *yāsā* meant to the Mongols. It is the subject of the second chapter of his *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā*: "Of the laws (*qawā'id*) which Chingiz-Khan framed and the *yāsās* which he promulgated after his rise to power."<sup>21</sup> The *qawā'id* and *yāsās* referred to by al-Juwaynī all concern the state: hunting as training for war; the organization of the army; the postal network for official communications (*yam*); and the levying of taxes in conquered territories. The chapter does not deal with customs. Al-Juwaynī explains how Genghis Khan made law:

In accordance and agreement with his own mind (*rāy*), he established a rule (*qānūnī*) for every occasion and a regulation (*dastūr*) for every circumstance; while for every crime (*gunāhī*) he fixed a penalty (*ḥaddī*) for [. . .]. These *yāsās* and ordinances (*aḥkām*) should be written down on rolls. These rolls are called *Great Book of Yāsās* (*yāsā-nāma-yi buzūrg*).<sup>22</sup>

To al-Juwaynī's mind, the *yāsā* clearly concerned matters of state (*qānūn*), but he also implicitly gives it a religious connotation, stating that infractions are punished with a *ḥadd*, a term for a legal penalty borrowed from the vocabulary of Muslim law. Elsewhere in his chronicle, al-Juwaynī uses the term *yāsā* combined with another word such as decree (*ḥukm*) or custom (*ādḥīn* or *yūsūn*) to refer to Mongol customs. He also refers to a customary prohibition without using the term *yāsā*.

19 This letter, which was originally composed in Mongolian, has come down to us only in the form of a Persian and a Latin translation. John of Plano Carpini was involved in the Latin translation. Latin and Persian texts in Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 23 (1922–23): 13–14 and 17–18.

20 David Ayalon, "The Great *Yāsa* of Chingiz Khān, A Re-examination. Preface," *StIsI* 33 (1971): 101–104 (part A, The Basic Data in the Islamic Sources on the *Yāsa* and on its Contents).

21 Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā* 1:16–25; Juwaynī/Boyle 1:23.

22 Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā* 1:17; Juwaynī/Boyle 1:25.

In the Arabic sources, the ambiguity in the meaning of the term *yāsā* is even more obvious. Al-ʿUmarī gives a list of the *yāsā* of Genghis Khan whose infringement was punishable by death, and he also gives a list of Mongol customs. But in the list of *yāsās* he includes customary rules such as the prohibitions concerning water and the slaughtering of animals.<sup>23</sup> Taqī al-Dīn ʿAbd l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad al-Maqrīzī reproduces al-ʿUmarī’s list in his *Khiṭāṭ*,<sup>24</sup> but his account of the *yāsā* is polemical. Al-Maqrīzī’s purpose is to demonstrate the anti-Islamic nature of the *yāsā*, and to this end he improves al-ʿUmarī’s text, attributing the authorship of what he considers to be laws to Genghis Khan. In introducing these provisions he uses terms borrowed from the vocabulary of Islamic jurisprudence: “Genghis Khan made a law (*sharaʿa*);” “he issued an edict (*sharaṭa*);” “he ordered (*alzama*);” “he forbade (*manaʿa*).” The Mongol prohibitions, which al-ʿUmarī depicts simply as customs, thus become laws established by Genghis Khan.

In the Latin and Chinese sources, by contrast, there is no confusion between the Mongol *jasaq* and *yosun*. The Franciscan John of Plano Carpini speaks of the laws and ordinances (*leges et statuta*) promulgated by Genghis Khan, which he distinguishes from the Mongols’ customs and ancestral practices (*traditiones*).<sup>25</sup> In the Chinese sources, the term *jasaq* is only twice qualified with great (*yeke*). The first such occasion is in the *Yüan Shih*, the official historical chronicle of the Yüan dynasty, in which it is written that Ögödei promulgated the “*yeke jasaq*,” glossed in Chinese as “the great [law]” (*ta-fa-ling*), at the time of his enthronement at the *quriltai* of September 1229. The great *jasaq* also appears in a document dated to 1264 dealing with the imperial family. The other references to the *jasaq* are in relation to judgements concerning the interests of the state (military matters, the management of post stations, etc.) or serious crimes such as murder.<sup>26</sup>

The Mongol, Chinese and Latin sources leave no doubt that the precepts of the *jasaq* concerned matters of state. They involved, as we shall observe, both rules of a general nature expressing a political ideology, and various

23 Al-ʿUmarī, Arabic text, 9.

24 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawāʿiẓ wa-l-iʿtibār fī dhikr al-khiṭāṭ wa-l-āthār* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1418/1998) III:383–385.

25 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 40.

26 Paul Heng-chao Ch’en, *Chinese Legal Tradition under the Mongols. The Code of 1291 as Reconstructed* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 5–6; Françoise Aubin, “Les sanctions et les peines chez les Mongols,” in *La peine. Punishment* (Bruxelles: De Boeck Université, 1991), 242–293.

regulations, particularly on military matters, contravention of which was in most cases punishable by death.

*The yāsā in the Modern Scholarly Tradition*

European research on the *yāsā* could be said to have begun with John of Plano Carpini, who, in his *Ystoria Mongalorum*, presents Genghis Khan as a law-giver: “He returned to his country and there made all sorts of laws and ordinances (*leges et statuta*) which the Tartars strictly observe.”<sup>27</sup> In the modern period, research on the *yāsā* was begun by Pétis de la Croix in the seventeenth century, with his *Histoire du grand Genghizcan*.<sup>28</sup> Given the influence that this work has had on later research, it warrants some attention here.

Pétis de la Croix held the position of Turkish and Arabic secretary and interpreter to Louis XIV for forty years. He undertook his history of Genghis Khan at the request of Colbert. The latter, after hearing the translation of an Ottoman poem to the glory of the Great Khan read at the King’s Library, had decided that this “Mongol hero” was more deserving of the title of conqueror of Asia than Alexander the Great. Pétis de la Croix spent ten years compiling information from the Persian, Arabic and Turkish manuscripts held in the royal library in order to compose his vast tapestry of Genghis Khan and the Mongols. He enumerates twenty-two “*loys*,” drawn from different and often late sources which can readily be identified. This Mongol legislative code supposedly contained Genghis Khan’s prescriptions concerning the management of the state, military regulations, diplomatic relations, justice and relations between tribes. Pétis de la Croix postulates that the *yāsā* was promulgated at the *quriltai* of 1206, although neither the *Secret History* nor the most reliable medieval sources refer to this. To his credit, he refrains from making moral judgements on the precepts he cites, but does frequently interpret them in the light of Western culture. Most of the Latin and Arabic sources refer to forced labour in time of war, especially for women.<sup>29</sup> He glosses this rule as follows: “To banish idleness in his states, he obliged all his subjects to serve the public

27 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 64: “*Et inde in terram propriam est reversus et ibidem leges et statuta mutiplicia fecit, que Tartari inviolabiliter observant.*”

28 *Histoire du grand Genghizcan*, Pétis de la Croix, le père (Paris: Vve Jombert, 1710). The text was edited after his death (4 November 1695) by his son, who added to his father’s text “The summary of the life of the authors from whom has been compiled the history of Genghis Khan.” An English translation soon followed in 1722, dedicated to the Prince of Wales, the future George II.

29 John of Plano Carpini, for example, did not consider the performance of these obligations to be a *yāsā*, whereas al-Maqrīzī makes them a precept of the *yāsā*.

in some manner. Those who did not go to war were at certain times required to labour without pay on public works, and they spent one day a week in the private service of the Prince.”<sup>30</sup>

In chapter IV, “Description of a Mongol diet, which they call *Cour-ilté* [*quriltai*]. Establishment of the *yassas* or the Mongol Laws,” Pétis de la Croix comments on Genghis Khan’s decision as follows:

Being well aware that the establishment of laws is the principal duty of a sovereign, he did not fail to declare that he considered it appropriate to add to the country’s ancient laws new ones that he wished to have observed [. . .], after the salutes, they started reading the *yassas*.<sup>31</sup>

The weakness of Pétis de la Croix’s study lies in his lack of critical distance from the texts. He considers neither the origins nor the chronology of his sources, thus treating all accounts on the same basis. Furthermore, being completely unaware of the system of representations used in relation to Mongol religious beliefs, he was unable to correctly interpret the customary rule forbidding bathing in water for fear of attracting lightning. He gives an explanation that is at best naïve:

Thunder was so feared by the Mongols in ancient Mongolia and other nearby countries [. . .] that they would throw themselves into lakes and rivers and many of them drowned. Genghis Khan, seeing that this fear was causing him the loss of soldiers, forbade them to bathe or make ablutions, or to wash their clothes.<sup>32</sup>

In the eighteenth century, some historians were tempted by wider horizons than those of mere erudition: they aspired to write about civilizations in general. Voltaire is representative of this tendency, writing in his *Essay on Universal History* of his ambition to renew the historical genre by selecting those events “that arose from the manners and spirit of the time.”<sup>33</sup> One must, he wrote, reconcile knowledge of human nature, “whose basis is the same everywhere”<sup>34</sup> and that of the diversity of customs. He aspired to capture the spirit of men through customs, being convinced that ideas determined manners of living.

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30 Pétis de la Croix, 104.

31 Pétis de la Croix, 98; passage on the *yāsā*, 98–110.

32 Pétis de la Croix, 108.

33 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs*, ed. René Pomeau, 2 vols. (Paris, 1990) 1:731

34 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs* 2:314.

His chapter on the Mongols, entitled “Of the East and Genghis Khan,”<sup>35</sup> well illustrates this approach. The figure of Genghis Khan provides him with material to draw his picture of the Mongol people. How did Voltaire see Mongol law? Voltaire repeats the claim that the *yāsā* was proclaimed during the assembly of Mongol chiefs in 1206, but, seeking common ground between cultures, he writes:

It seems that the Tartar khans would customarily assemble diets in the spring [. . .] who knows whether these assemblies and our feudal parliaments, in the months of March and May, may not have had a common origin?<sup>36</sup>

He rejects, on the other hand, Pétis de la Croix’s supposition that the code of Genghis Khan had been written down. Voltaire claims to rely on Antoine Gaubil, author of another history of Genghis Khan,<sup>37</sup> who stated that the Tartars had no knowledge of the art of writing. Voltaire developed from this starting point a discussion of the degree of civilization of the various peoples. He could not, in fact, accept that “ignorant and bellicose men”<sup>38</sup> could have invented a writing system:

The custom of transmitting to posterity every utterance of the tongue and every idea of the mind is one of the great refinements of a sophisticated society, known only in a few highly-developed nations. [. . .]. The laws of the Tartars were promulgated by mouth, and were not represented by any symbols that could perpetuate their memory.<sup>39</sup>

Of the twenty-two *yāsās* enumerated by Pétis de la Croix, Voltaire mentions only a few, no doubt those that warranted most attention in his eyes:

Genghis Khan announced in this assembly that it was required to believe in only one God, and not to persecute anyone for their religion [. . .], military discipline was rigorously established [. . .] and all those who did not go to war were obliged to work one day a week in the service of the Great

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35 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs* 1:604–616.

36 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs* 1:606.

37 Antoine Gaubil, *Histoire de Genghis Khan et de toute la dynastie des mongols ses successeurs* (Paris: Briasson, 1739).

38 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs* 1:605.

39 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs* 1:607.

Khan. Adultery was forbidden [. . .]. Sorcery was expressly prohibited under penalty of death.<sup>40</sup>

Voltaire, always highly critical of practices he considered superstitious, saw in this last point a positive aspect of Mongol law. Voltaire's account of the *yāsā* has no historical value in itself: he is content to repeat the accounts of second-hand sources. It is, nevertheless, the product of a mind that marked its age, and as such, warrants attention since the author gives his personal interpretation of Mongol law, which he endeavours to locate in the vast perspective of the history of human civilization.

Baron Constantin d'Ohsson's *Histoire des Mongols*, published in 1824, was in its time considered to be the first serious study of Genghis Khan, and long remained an authoritative work. D'Ohsson dedicates several pages to what he calls the "great ordinances" (*Ouloug-Yassa*) of Genghis Khan, taken mainly from al-Maqrīzī,<sup>41</sup> whom he closely follows. But his view is tainted with moral judgements, as can be seen from his depiction of Mongol society before the establishment of Genghis Khan's laws:

He repressed with harsh laws the vices and disorders which had reigned among the Tartar peoples [. . .]. The child did not obey his parents, nor the younger brother the elder; the husband did not trust his wife, and the wife did not submit to her husband; the rich did not aid the poor, and the lowly lacked respect towards their betters.<sup>42</sup>

D'Ohsson thus reconstructs a negative image of pre-imperial Mongol society on the basis of what he considers to be the reality of Genghis Khan's time after the imposition of the *yāsā*. One observes in this passage the social hierarchy based on age as well as certain principles of the *yāsā*. While granting Genghis Khan the merit of having imposed rules on Mongol society, he accuses him of following "the barbarous practices of shamanism"<sup>43</sup> and of having sanctioned by his laws "certain superstitious ideas of the Tartar peoples, who fancied that a host of trivial things bore ill fortune."<sup>44</sup>

40 Voltaire, *Essai sur les mœurs* 1:606–607.

41 Baron Constantin d'Ohsson, *Histoire des Mongols depuis Tchinguiz-Khan jusqu'à Timour-Lanc, avec une carte de l'Asie au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 4 vols. (La Haye & Amsterdam: Les frères Van Cleef, 1834–35); passage on the *yāsā*, 1:404–415.

42 D'Ohsson, 1:407.

43 D'Ohsson, 1:412.

44 D'Ohsson, 1:409.

Pétis de la Croix and Baron d'Ohsson, like the Muslim authors, made no distinction between imperial edicts and customs. A number of factors led to their conception of the *yāsā* gaining broad acceptance. They established the idea that in 1206 Genghis Khan promulgated a written legal code. This, they thought, could be reconstituted from the elements included in later Islamic sources, in particular al-Maqrīzī's polemical account. Silvestre de Sacy, who in 1826 translated al-Maqrīzī's passage on the *yāsā* with a commentary, also played a part in giving too much weight to this text as a source on Mongol law.<sup>45</sup> His translation was later used by those researchers on the subject who had no knowledge of oriental languages. Thus did this "imaginary" Mongol legal code gain considerable acceptance among the scholarly community for over 250 years.<sup>46</sup>

A different view of the *yāsā* appeared with David Ayalon's 1971 work on the subject. Ayalon set out to demonstrate that our knowledge of the *yāsā* was based on a mistaken reliance on al-Maqrīzī, who had, as we have seen, distorted the account originally given by al-'Umarī. Ayalon's greatest contribution lies in bringing to light al-Maqrīzī's real object: that of proving that the sultans of Cairo had incorporated Mongol practices in the Mamluk administration.<sup>47</sup> In an iconoclastic article published in 1986, David Morgan cast doubt on much of the historiography concerning the *yāsā*.<sup>48</sup> He pointed out that the oldest references to the *yāsā* in the Persian sources were few and vague: the concept seems to have taken shape in the minds of historians from the mid-fourteenth century onwards.<sup>49</sup> More recently, Irwin, on the basis of an analysis of Ibn 'Arabshāh's *Fākihāt al-khulafā'*, has substantiated the claim of a written code of

45 Silvestre de Sacy, *Chrestomathie arabe ou Extrait de divers écrivains arabes, tant en prose qu'en vers*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie royale, 1826) II:157–190.

46 Valentin A. Riasanovsky, in a work published in 1937, presented what he termed "fragments of the great *yassa*." He listed thirty-six of these, most of them drawn from al-Maqrīzī's *Khiṭāṭ*, see *Fundamental Principles of Mongol Law* (Bloomington: Indiana University Publications, 1937), 83–86. The main exemplars of this historiographical tendency are: Gueorgui Vernadsky, "Juwaini's Version of Chingis Khan's *Yasa*," *Annales de l'Institut Kondakov* XI (1940): 33–45; Abraham N. Poliak, "The Influence of Chingiz-Khān's *Yasa* upon the General Organization of the Mamlūk State," *BSOAS* 10/4 (1942): 862–876, and Mansura Haider, "The Mongolian Traditions and their Survival in Central Asia (XIV<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> Centuries)," *CAJ* 28/1–2 (1984): 57–79.

47 David Ayalon, "The Great *Yāsa* of Chingiz Khān: A Re-examination," *StIsI* 38 (1973): 107–156 (part C2, al-Maqrīzī's Passage on the *Yāsa* under the Mamlūks).

48 David O. Morgan, "The 'Great *Yāsā* of Chingiz Khān' and Mongol Law in the İlkhānate," *BSOAS* 49/1 (1986): 163–176.

49 David O. Morgan, "The 'Great *Yāsā*,' 172–173.

law.<sup>50</sup> But Ibn ‘Arabshāh’s main aim was to emphasize the differences between Mongol judicial practices and the Islamic justice administered by the *qāḍī*.

The studies carried out by specialists in the history of the Yüan have brought to light further information on the *yāsā*. The Chinese sources, which draw their material from original documents, are more accurate than the Islamic narrative sources. Paul Ratchnevsky’s major studies led him to the conclusion that the *yāsā* was neither a legal code drawn up in one particular period, nor a single, systemic and homogeneous document, but rather a series of decrees promulgated by Genghis Khan and his successors in response to changing requirements.<sup>51</sup> Where most scholars considered that Genghis Khan had codified Mongol customary law, Ratchnevsky criticized this view on the grounds that customary law was never written down.<sup>52</sup> Heng-chao Ch’en, for his part, discussed the problem of the *yāsā* (*ta-cha-sa*) in the context of the legislative system of the Yüan,<sup>53</sup> seeking to show that the *yāsā* was not a systematically organized legal treatise and that it did not apply to all peoples who fell under Mongol rule.

Thus, for several centuries, the scholarly tradition relied on Islamic sources to study the Mongol *yāsā*, and due to its failure to critically analyse the chronology and origins of these texts ended up adopting the Muslim authors’ point of view. Debate centred around the existence of a written code of law along the lines of the Shari‘a, which would include both imperial edicts and customary rules. The above discussion points to the need for a closer examination of what the *yāsā* represented for the Mongol khans, and how it was understood by medieval writers. Only on this basis will it be possible to come to a better understanding of the reality of the *yāsā* in the context of the Mongol empire as well as in the lands of Islam.

50 Robert G. Irwin, “What the Partridge Told the Eagle: A Neglected Arabic Source on Chinggis Khan and the Early History of the Mongols,” in *The Mongol Empire & its Legacy*, eds. Reuven Amitai-Press and David Morgan (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 5–11.

51 Paul Ratchnevsky, “Die *Yasa* (Jasaq) Cinggis-khans und ihre Problematik,” *Schriften zur Geschichte und Kultur des alten Orients* 5 (1974): 471–487; *Cinggis-khan sein Leben und Wirken* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983), 164–172; Françoise Aubin, “Some Characteristics of Penal Legislation Among the Mongols (13th–21th Centuries),” in *Central Asian Law: An Historical Overview. A Festschrift Birthday of Herbert Franke*, eds. Wallace Johnson and Irina F. Popova (The University of Kansas, 2004), 119–151.

52 Paul Ratchnevsky, *Cinggis-khan*, 165–166.

53 Paul Heng-chao Ch’en, *Chinese Legal Tradition under the Mongols*.



## The *yāsā* and the Mongol Empire

### *Subjecting the World Potected by the tenggeri*

John of Plano Carpini was the first to see the obligation imposed on all peoples of the earth to become subjects of the Mongols as a *yāsā*. Speaking of the laws and ordinances (*leges et statuta*) of Genghis Khan, he says: “Another ordinance is that they must subdue all the Earth and not make peace with any nation that is not subject to them.”<sup>54</sup> It was presumably in these terms that the Franciscan traveller understood Güyük’s letter of 1246 to Pope Innocent IV, of which we have an original version, the Persian translation of a lost Mongolian original:

You who are the great pope, with your kings, let you all come to us in person [. . .], and we will have you hear the orders arising from the *yāsā* [. . .]. With the force of God (*bi-quwat-i khudāy*), from the rising to the setting sun, all the territories of the earth have been granted to us [. . .]. Now you must say with a sincere heart: We will be your subjects (*īl*, Mongolian *el*) [. . .] and we will recognize your submission [. . .]. And if you do not observe God’s order, and contravene our orders, we will know you to be our enemies (*yāghī*, Mongolian *bulgha*).<sup>55</sup>

Here it is necessary to briefly dwell upon the concept of Eternal Heaven and on the two terms: harmony and rebellion. Christians and Muslims immediately understood Eternal Heaven as a metaphor for God. The Armenian historian Grigor Akanc’i dedicates a chapter of his *T’at’arac’ Patmut’iwnk’* to the *yāsā*. He writes:

When they unexpectedly came to realize their position, being much oppressed by their miserable and poor life, they invoked the aid of God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, and they make a great covenant with him to abide by his commands [. . .]. These are the precepts of God which he imposed on them, and which they themselves call *yasax*.<sup>56</sup>

But the *tenggeri* referred just as much to the sky and as to the supernatural entities that might reside therein, and was not object of any cult. As for the term

54 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 64: “Aliud statutum est quod sibi subiugare debeant omnem terram.”

55 On these two terms, see Doerfer II:317–320; II:194–201.

56 Grigor Akanc’i, *History of the Nation of the Archers*, 289. Al-Qalqashandī, in his entry on the *yāsā*, writes: “It is clear that they believe in the oneness of God, creator of Heaven and Earth.” See *Ṣubḥ* IV:310.

*möngke*, it does not evoke the Christian idea of an eternity without beginning or end, but rather solidity and durability. In the *Secret History*, the influence of this concept is clearer from the time of Ögödei's reign on, and the term later appears repeatedly in the khans' letters, where it indicates that the Mongol ruler enjoyed the protection of Heaven, that is, of the *tenggeri*.

Some decades ago, Eric Voegelin put forward the hypothesis that these letters should be considered not just as diplomatic correspondence, but as legal ordinances in themselves.<sup>57</sup> And they were indeed understood as such. Barhebraeus, in the chapter on the *yāsā* in his Syriac chronicle, writes:

When [the Mongols] have need to write any letter to rebels, and they must send an envoy, let them not threaten them with the great size of their army [. . .], but let them say only, If you will submit yourselves obediently ye shall find good treatment [. . .], but if you resist—as for us what do we know? But the everlasting God knoweth what will happen to you.<sup>58</sup>

Güyük's letter, like all those sent by the Mongol khans, expresses a "theocratic" concept of the order of the world. The establishment of the empire is a divine order (*litterae dei*) which must be made known to those as yet ignorant of it; the Great Khans are messengers of God. The order is a simple one: in Heaven there is one eternal God, and on Earth there is only one master, Genghis Khan, the son of God. According to Eric Voegelin, the Mongol empire is only beginning to take shape (*imperium mundi in statu nascendi*): all the peoples of the world are potential members of it.<sup>59</sup> This is why those who refuse to obey are considered rebels, and the resulting violence is, in a legal perspective, quite simply a punitive expedition to implement God's order. Reading between the lines of these letters, Genghis Khan's successors and heirs enjoy the same privilege of ruling the world.

The first reference to this distinction between subject peoples and peoples in a state of rebellion occurs in the *Secret History*, in paragraph 170, which is seminal to the Mongol ideology. This passage recounts the voluntary submission to Genghis Khan of a group of the Kerait, a people in harmony (*el irgen*), while those within the clan who refused to submit are considered to be a people in a state of rebellion (*bulgha irgen*) against the will of the *tenggeri*, and must therefore be fought. This concept of the world order, as the Mongols

57 Eric Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission to European Powers, 1245–1255," *Byzantion* xv (1940–41): 412.

58 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 354; Bar Hebraeus/Budge, 354.

59 Eric Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission," 404.

portrayed it to themselves and as expressed in this paragraph of the *Secret History*, is repeated in the form of a *yāsā* in all the orders of submission sent by the Mongol khans. Mongol political theocracy, presenting itself as the implementation of a law decreed by Heaven through the agency of a ruler who was either pagan or, in Ghazan Khan's case, accused of not respecting the Sharī'a, was even more surprising for the Muslims than for the Christians.

*The Means of Conquest: A Disciplined Army*

At the time of Genghis Khan's rise to power, relations between groups on the steppe were regulated by a ritualized system, whose negative aspect was based on vengeance while its positive aspect was based on matrimonial exchange. It had its origins in the customary equality of the lineage groups that made up pre-imperial Mongol society.<sup>60</sup> The conquest of the cities of Central Asia took place in line with this mechanism of vengeance, either in response to affronts or following a refusal to submit. The sources attest to the legal regulation of massacres and pillaging. If the inhabitants accepted the order to submit, they were evacuated from the city and the pillaging could begin, but where they refused, they were massacred. The case of the capture of Samarkand in 1220 provides an example of the military discipline that Genghis Khan imposed on the Mongol troops. After the capture of the city, its inhabitants, who had been evacuated outside the walls, were spared, and the city was pillaged. However, the houses of two Muslim dignitaries who had led the delegation to surrender the city were left untouched, as were those of "fifty thousand persons" placed under their protection.

Most of the *jasaq* in the *Secret History* are military directives concerning either discipline or tactics. Paragraph 153 mentions two *jasaq* of Genghis Khan regulating the conduct of battle and pillaging:

If we overcome the enemy, we shall not stop for booty. When the victory is complete, that booty will surely be ours, and we will share among ourselves. If we are forced by the enemy to retreat, let us turn back to the point where we begun the attack. *Those* men who do not turn back to the point where we began the attack shall be cut down!<sup>61</sup>

60 Roberte Hamayon, "Mérite de l'offensé vengeur, plaisir du rival vainqueur. Le mouvement ascendant des échanges hostiles dans deux sociétés mongoles," in *La Vengeance. Études d'ethnologie, d'histoire et de philosophie, vol. 11, Vengeance et pouvoir dans quelques sociétés extra-occidentales*, ed. R. Verdier (Paris: Éd. Cujas, 1980), 107–108; Françoise Aubin, "Les sanctions et les peines," 245–248.

61 *Secret History* § 153.

The offence which requires this penalty is not that against the authority of the commander. The refusal to return to combat is perceived as a betrayal of the Great Khan and of the warrior's brothers in arms.<sup>62</sup> This act deserves decapitation, the most degrading punishment because it involves the spilling of blood. For human beings, this prevents their having an afterlife as an ancestor and, thereby, the passing on of clan identity.<sup>63</sup>

The non-Mongol sources also mention numerous regulations dealing with military discipline, all involving the death penalty. According to John of Plano Carpini and al-Juwaynī, it was forbidden under pain of death to transfer between military units. Barhebraeus adds that a commander who accepted a fighter in breach of this regulation suffered the same fate as the offender.<sup>64</sup> One may suppose that, here too, the underlying offence is that of betrayal: anyone complicit in an act of betrayal is equally liable to incur the death penalty.<sup>65</sup>

Al-'Umarī cites further regulations on discipline and the personal responsibilities of the troops: "During attack and flight, when a soldier loses his pack, his bow or his quiver, he who follows him must dismount to help him; if not, he is killed."<sup>66</sup> This rule may be based on the concept of *omoq*<sup>67</sup> which is implicit in paragraph 190 of the *Secret History*: "If, when one is still alive, an enemy is allowed to take away one's quiver, what is the advantage of living?"<sup>68</sup> In Mongolian, the word for pride (*omoq*) and the word for family, clan, tribe (*obog*) are etymologically related to each other, but have developed separately.<sup>69</sup> The semantic link between the two terms may explain the significance of this *jasag*. In Mongol society, the clan's pride and indeed its survival resided in its ability to defend itself or be avenged by members of the kinship group: one who had lost his quiver could not perform this fundamental duty, and had therefore lost his honour.

62 Grigor Akanc'i reports the same punishment in case of treachery, *Histoire de la nation des archers*, 290.

63 Roberte Hamayon, "Mérite de l'offensé," 124.

64 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 412.

65 A slightly different version of this military order is given by al-'Umarī (Arabic text, 8): "he who found a deserter and did not return him to his commander was executed." Al-Maqrīzī repeats the entire list given by al-'Umarī; for the sake of conciseness, we will only mention him where his point of view differs from that of al-'Umarī.

66 Al-'Umarī, Arabic text, 9.

67 On this notion, see Roberte Hamayon, "Mérite de l'offensé," 122–123.

68 *Secret History* § 190.

69 See Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, "obog" and "omog," 611. On the etymological development of this word, see Doerfer IV:418.

*The yārghū and the Security of the Empire*

Genghis Khan knew that to ensure the stability of his nascent empire, he would have to create a central authority opposed to the old clan structures and thus strip the traditional organs of their authority. In this way he could seek to eliminate all forms of solidarity which did not serve the interests of the state. At the *quriltai* of 1206, when Genghis Khan founded the great Mongol state,<sup>70</sup> he provided it with a supreme judicial organ. Shigi-Qutuqu,<sup>71</sup> designated supreme judge, was charged with supervising all the peoples of empire:

When protected by Eternal Heaven, I am engaged in bringing the entire people under *my* sway, be: Eyes *for me* to see with, Ears *for me* to hear with [...]. Let no one disobey your word! [...] Of the entire people, curbing theft, discouraging falsehood, execute those who deserve death, punish those who deserve punishment.<sup>72</sup>

The position held by Shigi-Qutuqu, with the function of judging crimes committed in the empire, represents the prototype of the Mongol judicial machine, the *yārghū*, which was progressively put in place by Genghis Khan's successors. In the Persian sources, the term *yārghū* is used for the investigative court responsible for enquiring—often with the use of torture—into the cases of dismissed ministers, corrupt officials and other enemies of the state.<sup>73</sup> The term is derived from the Mongolian *jargu* meaning: complaint or justice.<sup>74</sup>

Ibn 'Arabshāh's account of the Mongol *yārghū* is detailed and well-argued.<sup>75</sup> The religious jurisdiction exercised by the Sharī'a judge is evidently Ibn 'Arabshāh's frame of reference in describing the practices of the *yārghū*.

70 The term *ulus* here means "peoples." The meaning "state having a defined territory" is a later one.

71 See Paul Ratchnevsky, "Sigi-Qutuqu, ein mongolische Gefolgsmann im 12.-13. Jahrhundert," *CAJ* X/2 (1965): 87–120.

72 *Secret History* § 203.

73 See David Morgan, "The Great Yāsā," 173–175; Ann K.S. Lambton, *Continuity and Change in Medieval Persia* (London: Tauris, 1988), 95–96, 274–275.

74 Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, "zar(*gamma*)u," 1037.

75 Ibn 'Arabshāh had taken prisoner by Timur in 1401 after the siege of Damascus. He remained in the Turkic-Mongolian world until 1422. In one of his works: *Fākihāt al-khulafā' wa muḥākahāt al-zurafā'*, he speaks of the laws of Genghis Khan and of the Mongol customs, see *Liber Arabicus sive Fructus imperatorum et Jocatio ingeniosorum*, ed. G. Freytag (Bonn, 1832), 227–250. Ibn 'Arabshāh does not use the term *yāsā*, but *tūrā* (Turkic, *töre*). On *tūrā*, see Doerfer 1:264–267; Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 835–836.

In Islamic courts, a case was proven on the basis of the evidence given by witnesses, and as a result the qualifications for bearing witness were strictly regulated. Ibn ‘Arabshāh therefore criticizes the *yārghū*’s approach to evidence in order to demonstrate that its procedures are contrary to the Shari‘a. He denounces the establishment of guilt in cases of illicit sexual relations on the basis of one sole witness’ evidence, where in Muslim law four male witnesses are required. He notes that evidence laid against adult men by persons in certain categories (young men, girls, women and slaves), which is strictly regulated in Islam, is acceptable in the Mongol legal system. According to Muslim law, the testimony of two women can only be accepted if it concerns matters in which women are competent, such as childbirth. The testimony of young men and slaves is valid only within their own social group, while that of girls is never acceptable. By emphasizing that these are not qualified witnesses, Ibn ‘Arabshāh challenges the Mongol legal procedures.

Ibn ‘Arabshāh is a later author, and may well be describing the practices of the Timurid period, especially since he lived among Timur’s entourage. The sources, moreover, indicate that Timur governed his empire using the laws of Genghis Khan, and they also attest to the survival of a separate penal system parallel to the Islamic courts. In the Timurid *yārghū*, specialized staff was responsible for ensuring that administrative justice conformed to Mongol law.<sup>76</sup> Maria Subtelny has recently demonstrated, with regard to this investigative court, the tensions that existed between the Shari‘a and Timur’s *törä/yāsā* in Timurid Iran. She writes: “The Yarghu violated the fundamental norms of Islamic juridical procedure in that the accused was presumed guilty rather than innocent, and testimony was not based in the use of impartial, certified witness.”<sup>77</sup> In any case, even if the procedures described by Ibn ‘Arabshāh are those of the Timurid period, since the *yārghū* of Timur’s time had inherited Mongol practices it is certainly the Mongol *yārghū* that is the object of the author’s criticism.

### *The yāsā against the Shari‘a*

To Each his Religion

The sources unanimously agree that Genghis Khan made it his law not to give precedence to any religion over any other. John of Plano Carpini writes that: “They believe in a creator God [. . .], but since their religion is not governed by any law, they [the Mongols] do not force any person to renounce his own

76 For the *yārghū* under Timur, see John E. Woods, “Timur’s Genealogy,” 101; Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Rise and Role of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 171–172.

77 Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 24.

faith.<sup>78</sup> Contemporary historiography has seen this *yāsā* as expressing Mongol religious tolerance, but it may have served a much more pragmatic purpose: that of avoiding conflict between the empire's various religious communities. In any case, the Ilkhans, until their conversion to Islam, were quite simply indifferent to the religious beliefs of their subjects. They considered that religious affiliation was a personal matter in which the authorities should not intervene.

The Islamic sources also state that Genghis Khan had established the principle that the dignitaries of all sects and religions should be honoured. In order to give concrete expression to his respect for them, he exempted them from taxes. This was a standard practice begun prior to the Mongol conquest of China, with the meeting in 1222 between the Great Khan and Ch'ui Ch'ui, the fifth patriarch of a Tao'ist sect. After his encounter with the Taoist patriarch, Genghis Khan decided to grant privileges and protection to members of that sect.<sup>79</sup> He did this out of his respect for religion in general, but would not tolerate a religion unwilling to serve the Mongols.<sup>80</sup> The Great Khan's good will towards those men who were supposed to be in contact with a God, whether the creator or not, no doubt resulted from his own shamanistic beliefs. Genghis Khan's successors would continue this policy, most notably towards the Christians.

#### Were the Mongol *yosun* imposed upon the Muslims?

Ibn Taymiyya, in his anti-Mongol *fatwās*, does not mention the imposition on Muslims of customary rules such as the taboos regarding water and the ritual for slaughtering animals. The Mamluk narrative sources, by contrast, indicate that Muslim disapproval of these customs was such that they perceived them as legal provisions; transgression of which was punishable by death. These customary rules, whose significance was incomprehensible to the Muslims, were indeed contrary to the Sharī'a. The Mamluk historian al-Maqrīzī, whose purpose is to prove that the Mongol customary rules were utterly at odds with Islamic law, thus distorts al-'Umarī's account:<sup>81</sup>

He [Genghis Khan] enjoined them to wear their clothes without washing them [. . .], he forbade them to say that anything was impure (*najis*), for he said that everything is pure (*tāhir*), and he made no distinction between pure and impure.<sup>82</sup>

78 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 47.

79 See Yao Tao-chung, "Ch'ui Ch'u-chi and Chinggis Khan," *HJAS* 46 (1986): 201–202.

80 See Denise Aigle, "The Letters of Eljigidei, Hülegü and Abaqa," 149.

81 Al-'Umarī (Arabic text, 9) simply says that according to "the ancient *yāsā* of the Mongols" it was forbidden to bathe in water, on pain of death.

82 Al-Maqrīzī, *al-Mawā'iz*, 358.

The importance of spirits in the shamanistic system of representations, in which spirits and souls are homologous, points to the explanation for the taboos regarding water. After death, it was held that the soul had another mode of existence in the form of a spirit. This belief in spirits was the reason why, out of respect for them, bathing, washing clothes or washing dishes in rivers was forbidden:<sup>83</sup> their dwelling places were not to be polluted. This prohibition on water was associated with another factor for the medieval Mongols: their fear of attracting a thunderstorm, which was seen as a supernatural punishment for failure to respect one's obligations to the spirits. Al-Juwaynī and the Latin sources further indicate that these prohibitions applied in spring and summer, the period when men and beasts were most at risk of being struck by lightning. These tragic deaths were interpreted as the spirits' revenge.

The central role of ritual ablutions in Islam led the Muslims to consider that the Mongols had no concept of purity. The concept did, however, exist in Mongol culture, but in different forms, as can be seen from the measures taken towards the ill and the families of the dead. Illness was never considered to proceed from a natural cause: the Mongols considered that it resulted from either disregard for the spirits or vengeance. Since a natural remedy was not therefore available, the victim was treated by means of symbolic acts upon representations of the spirit, termed *ongon*.<sup>84</sup> The Mongols, until recent times, considered that illness came about either in the context of an exchange between the two worlds, in which the sufferer was an intermediary,<sup>85</sup> or as a result of the breach of a prohibition, in which case the illness, seen as a punishment, was a sign of disorder.<sup>86</sup> The sufferer from this second class of illness, having fallen prey to the spirits, was ostracised from his group. It fell to the shaman to find out what spirit was devouring the victim so as to avenge itself on him. The families of the dead were also considered impure since death, like illness, was a punishment or vengeance visited by the spirits. All the members of a dead person's family were separated from the clan for a variable period.

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83 The sources mention other prohibitions linked to the respect due to the spirits: it was forbidden to urinate on ashes or in water, to strike the threshold of a tent, to step across a dish of food, or to throw food into the ashes (it should be placed there by hand).

84 The *ongon* is a "sacred being, as seen in its material abode." The term was applied to both the spirit and the object it inhabited, and it was fed in order to keep it in its abode, see Roberte Hamayon, *La chasse à l'âme*, 404. The Baraba Tatars (seventeenth to twentieth centuries) made figurines (*qongırchaq*) which they feed, see Allen J. Frank, "Varieties of Islamization in Inner Asia. The Case of the Baraba Tatars, 1740–1917," in *En islam sibérien*, ed. Stéphane Dudoignon, special issue, *Cahiers du Monde russe* 41/2–3 (2000): 256–260.

85 Roberte Hamayon termed this a "compensatory illness."

86 Robrte Hamayon, *La chasse à l'âme*, 408.



The Mongol concept of purity cannot be compared to the Islamic concept, as it did not serve a ritual purpose. The purifications by fumigation that the shamans carried out were, like the removal of persons likely to be in the grip of malign spirits, protective measures. The cultural terrain, however, was favourable for the rapid development of an idea of ritual purity: Buddhism, notably in the form of Tibetan Lamaism, had no difficulty imposing its purificatory rites when it became the dominant religion in Mongolia.

The practice of sacrificing animals without spilling their blood also aroused Muslim disapproval: it was contrary to the Islamic form of ritual slaughter. In the Mongol shamanistic system, it was necessary to avoid spilling blood in order to ensure the symbolic afterlife of the animal. The respiratory system (*jülde*) consisting of the head, windpipe, heart and lungs, the bearers of the breath of life, had to be preserved. Removing these organs liberated the soul so that the animal's meat might be consumed without any risk of also consuming its soul. The preserved respiratory system of the slaughtered animal was considered to provide a base for the "possibility of life [of the soul]," thereby symbolically permitting a new animal to come into being.

Were these Mongol customary rules, which the Muslims perceived as *yāsā*, actually imposed upon Muslim populations? The way that Mongol law was applied in China under the Yüan may cast some light on the situation in the Islamic lands. In the Chinese sources, most references to the *yāsā* concern the interests of the state: judgements on military matters, the administration of the network of post stations, and some less serious offences such as the practice of magic, the sale of poison, and counterfeiting.<sup>87</sup> Paul Heng-chao Ch'en observes that these penalties only applied to the Chinese when the offences concerned matters of state. He also notes that after 1280 references to the *yāsā* become scarce—evidence that it was ill-suited to China's sedentary society. In the absence of similarly detailed documentation for Muslim regions, we can only put forward some hypotheses as to the actual impact of the *yāsā* in the lands of Islam.

We may suppose that, as in China, the ordinances concerning the interests of the state, military discipline and the functioning of the structures for controlling the empire applied to all its subjects. It is unlikely, by contrast, that the same went for the customary rules. As we have seen, they were linked to the shamanistic system of representations. The Mamluk sources give lists of offences and of customs without any context, and it is therefore difficult to interpret them. Al-Juwaynī does, however, provide a number of enlightening anecdotes on the application of the customary rules in Islamic territories. He mentions the case

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87 Paul Heng-chao Ch'en, *Chinese Legal Tradition under the Mongols*, 4–8.

of a Muslim who, having carefully closed all the doors of his house, proceeded to slit the throat of a sheep in accordance with Islamic ritual. A Turk burst in upon him and brought him before Ögödei, alleging that he had not respected the *yāsā*. Having considered the matter, the Great Khan said: "This poor man has respected the commandments of our *yāsā*, and this Turk has infringed it. The Moslem's life was spared [. . .], while the ill-natured Turk was handed over to the executioners of the Fate."<sup>88</sup> Al-Juwaynī's account, although of an edifying nature, bears witness to the Mongols' indifference to matters of religion.<sup>89</sup> This indifference is emphasized by most of the sources, even those which were hostile to them, as with a number of the Mamluk chronicles. In other words, one could do as one wished in one's own house, provided that the interests of the state were not prejudiced. Al-Juwaynī elsewhere remarks that the Mongols had made a *yāsā* proscribing the slaughter of animals according to the Islamic ritual. This rule was probably aimed at the Mongols, in order to prevent them imitating the Muslims, a hypothesis implicitly confirmed by the Mamluk historian al-'Umarī when he writes: "He who kills an animal like the Muslims has his own throat slit."<sup>90</sup> At the Khans' court, however, the prohibitions linked to the customary rules had to be respected, especially those relating to the spirits, who were greatly feared by the Mongols. William of Rubruc's companion narrowly avoided execution after bumping into the threshold of Möngke's tent.<sup>91</sup>

In matters of civil law, subject peoples appear to have been governed by traditional local rules. In the Islamic territories, the Mongols never abolished the Shari'a. Had Mongol customary rules been applied on a widespread basis across the Muslim territory that came under their control, we would certainly find detailed evidence for it in the Islamic sources, and Ibn Taymiyya would not have failed to use it as an argument in his anti-Mongol *fatwās*.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, for the Muslims and for the Mongols themselves, the *yāsā* expressed the imperial identity of Genghis Khan's line, given concrete shape by the imposition of a new political order across much of the Muslim world. In the fifteenth century, the role that the *yāsā* played in the Mamluk sultanate was quite different. David Ayalon has

88 Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā* 1:163; Juwaynī/Boyle 1:206–207.

89 The idea of Mongols' toleration appears to be well-grounded in the sources, see for example Jean-Paul Roux, "La tolérance religieuse dans les Empires turco-mongols," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 203/2 (1986): 131–168. Nevertheless, it was also for pragmatic grounds, see Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," 253–278.

90 Al-'Umarī, Arabic text, 9.

91 Guillemus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 262.

shown that al-Maqrīzī used of this concept to condemn the role of the *ḥājib*, a figure of increasing importance in his time who was responsible for administrative law.<sup>92</sup> To support his argument, al-Maqrīzī claimed that the *siyāsa* which the sultans followed was nothing other than a form of the *yāsā*, whose name had been deliberately corrupted. In the Mamluk sultanate, administrative law had therefore supplanted the religious law administered by the *qāḍī*. The Mongol legal instance, the *yārghū*, is in turn implicitly condemned by Ibn ‘Arabshāh when he describes the laws of Genghis Khan. Thus both al-Maqrīzī and Ibn ‘Arabshāh strongly emphasize the tension between the *yāsā* and the Shari‘a. The stances of these Mamluk historians seem attributable to the events which had, at their time, been taking place in the Levant. A new Tatar peril had emerged, this time led by a Turk, Timur, who, although Muslim, presented himself as restoring Genghis Khan’s political order. The *yāsā* became an argument used to instil fear of the other, the Tatar conqueror coming from the East.

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92 David Ayalon, “The Great *Yāsa* of Chingiz Khān, A Re-examination. Preface,” *StIsI* 38 (1973): 107–156 [part C2, al-Maqrīzī’ Passage on the *Yāsa* under the Mamlūks].

**PART 3**

*Conquering the World Protected by the Tenggeri*





## From ‘Non-Negotiation’ to an Abortive Alliance. Thoughts on the Diplomatic Exchanges between the Mongols and the Latin West

The *Secret History of the Mongols* recounts the lineages of the Mongol tribes in the form of a founding myth. The ancestor of the future Great Khan, we are told, was born fatherless from his mother Alan Qo'a, just like Jesus. She said:

Every night, a resplendent yellow man (*shira gü'ün*) entered by the light of the smoke-hole or the door top of the tent, he rubbed my belly and his radiance penetrated my womb. When he departed, he crept out on a moonbeam or a ray of sun in the guise of a yellow dog (*shira noqai*) [. . .]. When one understands that, the sign is *clear*: They are the sons of Heaven (*tenggeri-yin kö'üt*) [. . .]. When they become the rulers of all, then the common people will understand!<sup>1</sup>

It may seem awkward to begin an article on quite concrete diplomatic correspondence with a mythical tale. But I have chosen to open this study with these quotations because they include two motifs, which occur repeatedly in the diplomatic correspondences addressed to the kings of France and the Supreme Pontiffs. Here we find both the affirmation that the Mongol Khans are the “sons of Heaven” and the invocation of the protection of Heaven, the *tenggeri*, to submit all the peoples. In the diplomatic correspondence preserved in Latin, meanwhile, Genghis Khan is often referred to as the “son of God,” in other words the son of the *tenggeri*.

The objective here is to cast new light on the evolution of the diplomatic exchanges between the Great Khans of Mongolia, and later the Ilkhans of Iran, and the Latin West. It will be seen that the unconditional “non-negotiation” of the Great Khans gradually evolved under the Ilkhans, in response to political circumstances, leading them to adopt an apparently more conciliatory

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1 *Secret History* § 21. On the development of this legend, see chapter 6.

attitude towards the West. The Ilkhans sought military aid against a common enemy, the Mamluk sultanate of Cairo. But this alliance would never come to fruition, due to the mutual incomprehension of the two parties. A change of mentalities would have been necessary, but this never happened. The Ilkhans' proposals of alliances with the papacy and the kings of France were, in fact, almost always accompanied by a demand for submission, at least implicitly. The Mongol rulers considered themselves the most powerful on Earth thanks to the mandate they claimed to have received from Heaven. All peoples, even if they were potential allies, were required to obey them. As for the holders of power in the West, be they the incumbents of the Holy See in Rome or the holders of temporal power, their precondition for any alliance was conversion to Western Christianity, as is evidenced by the numerous letters addressed by the popes to the Ilkhans.

By way of introduction, I will briefly consider diplomatic exchanges in Eurasia prior to the creation of the Mongol empire, pointing to the existence of a continuous tradition. There follows a brief historiographical appraisal of the interest shown by researchers who have studied this correspondence from the eighteenth century on. I will consider the problem posed by the analysis of documents such as these, for most of which we have no originals but only translations and copies. The question of intermediary languages and of the interpreters who were needed to carry out these translations will then be considered. In other words, are these translations reliable? Secondly, on the basis of the analysis of a representative selection of the diplomatic correspondence, I will seek to explain the reasons why this alliance never came to fruition.

### Preliminary Reflections on Mongol Diplomacy

#### *The Long Tradition of Diplomatic Exchanges in Eurasia*

Pre-Mongol Eurasia had already established norms concerning ambassadors,<sup>2</sup> or envoys, to use the term found in medieval Turkic and Mongolian sources.<sup>3</sup> This is reflected in a "mirror for princes," the *Qutadgu Bilig*, the first narrative text written in Middle Turkic in the eleventh century by Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājjib. He writes:

<sup>2</sup> Denis Sinor, "Diplomatic Practices in Medieval Inner Asia," in *The Islamic World: from Classical to Modern Times. Essays in Honor of Bernard Lewis*, eds. C.E. Bosworth, Ch. Issawi and R. Savory (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1989), 337–355.

<sup>3</sup> In Turkic, the term for an envoy is *yalavach*, see Doerfer IV:106–107. In Mongol it is *elchi*, see Doerfer II:203–207; commentaries' Igor de Rachewiltz in *Secret History* I:446, 636, II:666, 923.

And by means of an envoy many fine things may be accomplished. So the envoy must be intelligent, steady, and wise, and a good interpreter of words. Words are his business: he has to know them inside and out [. . .]. He should know how to draw all sorts of documents; how to read and write; how to listen [. . .]. Finally, he must know all tongues when he opens his mouth to speak, and know all scripts when he takes pen to hand [. . .]. The man sent as envoy must be very virtuous, excelling his adversaries in every kind of negotiation [. . .]. The envoy's job consists in so much speech: if his words are right, he will reach his goal.<sup>4</sup>

At the time this was written, ambassadors—as during the period which concerns us—were men of great abilities, masters of languages, eloquence and negotiation. Furthermore, respect for the immunity granted to ambassadors was a fundamental in diplomatic relations, and also represents an element of continuity between the pre-Mongol and Mongol periods. The region's rulers generally respected this immunity, apart from some exceptional cases, which led to terrible reprisals. One such example is the well-known case of the invasion of Hungary in 1241, which arose from King Bela IV's failure to respect the immunity of the Khan's envoys. This offence was compounded by another "fault." He had admitted into his territory the Cumans who had in the meantime become subjects of the Mongols. The text of the ultimatum intended for Bela IV is addressed to Salvius Salvi, the papal legate in his court.<sup>5</sup> It was recorded by the Dominican Julian of Hungary on his return from his mission "*ad Magniam Ungariam*" on 21 December 1237.<sup>6</sup> The letter was written "in pagan characters and in the Tartar language" (*littere autem scripte sunt litteris*

4 Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Ḥājib, *Wisdom of Royal Glory*, chapter 33, 125–127.

5 On this ultimatum, see Denis Sinor, "Un voyageur du treizième siècle: le Dominicain Julien de Hongrie," *BSOAS* 14/3 (1952): 589–602. Discussion on the dates of the travel, *ibid.*, 595–598; "Diplomatic Practices," 343–344; "Les relations entre les Mongols et l'Europe jusqu'à la mort d'Arghoun et de Bela IV," *Cahiers d'histoire mondiale* 3 (1956): 32–43; Jean Richard, "Ultimatums mongols et textes apocryphes," 215; Peter Jackson, "World-Conquest and Local Accommodation: Threat and Blandishment in Mongol Diplomacy," in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East: Studies in Honour of John E. Woods*, eds. J. Pfeiffer and Sh. A. Quinn, in collaboration with E. Tucker (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 6–7.

6 Concerning the location of this region, see Denis Sinor, "Autour d'une migration de peuples au v<sup>e</sup> siècle," *JA* (1946–47): 64–66; "Un voyageur du treizième siècle," 595–598. See the discussion on *Magnia Hungarica* in *ibid.*, 595–597.



*paganis sed lingua tartarica*).<sup>7</sup> The missionary included a Latin translation of the document in the report he sent to the papal legate. This was the first letter addressed to a Western monarch by the Mongol Khan:

I Chayn,<sup>8</sup> messenger of the Heavenly King, to whom he has given the power on Earth (*nuntius regis celestis, cui dedit potentiam super terram*) to exalt those who submit to him and cast down his adversaries (*deprimere adversantes*) [. . .], I wonder at you, King of Hungary, that although I have sent you messengers thirty times, you have sent none of them back to me [. . .]. I know that you are a rich and powerful king [. . .]. It is therefore difficult for you to submit to me voluntarily. I have further learned that you keep the Cumans, my slaves (*Cumanos servos meos*), under your protection. Whence I charge you that hence forward you not keep them with you, and that you nor make me your enemy on their account.<sup>9</sup>

The identity of the author of this text cannot readily be determined. Denis Sinor considers that it was Batu, the Khan of the Golden Horde,<sup>10</sup> while Peter Jackson attributes the ultimatum to the Great Khan Ögödei.<sup>11</sup> The *Chayn* in question declares himself the “messenger of the heavenly king,” that is, king of Eternal Heaven, and says that the latter has given him “power on Earth,” a detail which could mean that the ultimatum was promulgated by Ögödei, but relayed by Batu.

But the identity of the sender is not the most important point here. The letter itself bears a message, which preaches the Mongol conception of peace—assuming that the Latin text is an accurate translation of the Mongolian, as it probably is. As we shall see, Latin translations of the time of the Great Khans of Mongolia appear to be faithful to the Mongolian originals. It would seem

7 Latin texts in H. Dörrie, “Drei Texte zur Geschichte der Ungarn und Mongolen,” *Nachrichten der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* 6 (1956): 178.

8 The Latin *Chayn* is a corruption of the title Great Khan, see Denis Sinor, “Un voyageur du treizième siècle,” 595.

9 Heinrich Dörrie, “Drei Texte zur Geschichte der Ungarn und Mongolen,” 179. English translation in Denis Sinor, “Diplomatic Practices,” 344; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West, 1221–1410* (Harlow: Pearson Longman, 2005), 60–61. This letter was not the first ultimatum sent by a Great Khan; we also have evidence of a letter sent from Ögödei to the Saljuq sultan of Rüm in 1236 which is preserved by Ibn Bibi, see Peter Jackson, “World-Conquest and Local Accommodation,” 6–7.

10 Denis Sinor, “Un voyageur du treizième siècle,” 595.

11 Peter Jackson, “World-Conquest and Local Accommodation,” 6.

that the “language specialists” who acted as intermediaries in making the text accessible to its addressee had a good knowledge of Mongol political culture.

### *A Brief Historiographical Assessment*

This diplomatic correspondence between the Mongols and the Latin West aroused the interest of researchers from an early date. The first orientalists to study the letters of the Great Khans passed a stern judgement upon them. Failing to place these documents in their cultural context, Henry Hoyle Howorth (1842–1888), for example, considered them a good example of the intolerable arrogance of the Mongols.<sup>12</sup> However, other, earlier scholars, had made better assessments of the letters. Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1693–1755), a preacher and church historian, considered the correspondence in his *Historia Tartarorum ecclesiastica*, published in 1741.<sup>13</sup> His object was to study the efforts of the Latin missionaries sent to convert the Mongols and their subject populations. In 1824, Jean-Pierre Abel de Rémusat (1788–1807)<sup>14</sup> set about studying this diplomatic correspondence from a cultural perspective.<sup>15</sup> He analysed, for example, the Chinese-language seal on a Mongolian-language letter sent by the Ilkhan Arghun to Philip the Fair in 1289. This great orientalist commented on the seal as follows:

The application of these Chinese hieroglyphs over the names of Egypt, Jerusalem and France, translated into Tartar letters, is quite singular and remarkable. Such a juxtaposition speaks to the imagination, and seems to express the new relationships that the Crusades, on one hand, and the conquests of Genghis Khan, on the other, had brought about between the peoples of the two ends of the Earth.<sup>16</sup>

Rémusat considers that the contacts with the civilization of the Far East had succeeded in releasing Europe from the narrow-mindedness into which it had fallen since the end of the Roman Empire.<sup>17</sup> This study paved the way for

12 Eric Voegelin, “The Mongol Orders of Submission,” 384.

13 [Johann Lorenz von Mosheim =] Laurenti Moshemii, *Historia Tartarorum ecclesiastica*, Helmstadt, 1741.

14 See a biography of Jean-Pierre Abel de Rémusat in “Notice sur les travaux de M. Abel-Rémusat, par M. Landresse,” *JA* (1834): 205–231; 296–316.

15 Abel-Rémusat, *Mémoires sur les Relations politiques des princes chrétiens, et particulièrement des rois de France avec les premiers empereurs Mongols* (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1824).

16 Abel-Rémusat, *Mémoires*, 115.

17 Abel-Rémusat, *Mémoires*, 156.

Paul Pelliot, who in the early twentieth century produced a number of studies on this diplomatic correspondence and especially on the Dominican and Franciscan missionaries,<sup>18</sup> as well as for Jean Richard's extensive research.<sup>19</sup> Despite their interest, and their importance for the subject of this article, I will not consider these works here, as they already form an important part of the secondary corpus on which, in addition to medieval sources, this research is based.

*Communication Difficulties: A 'Scattered Multilingual Corpus'*

The Mongol empire included a great many different peoples and ethnicities: hence the difficulties in communication experienced by embassies. Thomas Allsen, in his introduction to the Eurasian cultural context of the composition in Yemen of the *Rasūlid Hexaglot*, a multilingual dictionary, very rightly remarks that:

Being a language officer in the Mongolian realm was in no sense limiting; on the contrary, it was a key that opened many doors. Since language learning and language competence was such a political asset.<sup>20</sup>

We have a number of the diplomatic missives addressed by the Mongol authorities to the popes and to the kings of France Louis IX and Philip the Fair.<sup>21</sup> The popes in turn wrote letters to the Mongol rulers, in particular to the

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- 18 Paul Pelliot, *Recherches sur les chrétiens d'Asie centrale et d'Extrême-Orient*; "Les Mongols et la papauté," *Revue de l'Orient Chrétien* XXIII (1922–23): 3–30; XXIV (1924): 225–235; XXVIII (1931–32): 3–84. References are to the three volumes of the review, rather than to the work of Paul Pelliot which was never completed, see Jean Richard, *Au-delà de la Perse et de l'Arménie*, 65, n. 17. On these envoys, see also Igor de Rachewiltz, *Papal Envoys to the Great Khans*.
- 19 Jean Richard, "Le début des relations entre la papauté et les Mongols de Perse," *JA* (1949): 291–297; "Ultimatums mongols et textes apocryphes," 212–222; "Chrétiens et Mongols au concile: la papauté et les Mongols de Perse dans la seconde moitié du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *1274–Année charnière–Mutations et continuités. Colloques internationaux du CNRS n° 558, Lyon-Paris, 30 septembre–5 octobre 1974* (Paris: Éditions du CNRS, 1977), 30–44; "La politique orientale de Saint Louis. La croisade de 1248," in *Septième centenaire de Saint Louis. Actes des colloques de Royaumont et de Paris (17–21 mai 1970)* (Paris, 1976), 197–207; "D'Ālğigidaï à Ġazan," 57–69; *La papauté et les missions d'Orient au Moyen Âge (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XV<sup>e</sup> siècles)*; *Au-delà de la Perse*.
- 20 Thomas T. Allsen, *The King's Dictionary*, 35.
- 21 The kings of England attempted a rapprochement with the Ilkhans, but this did not result in any concrete military collaboration, see L. Lockhart, "The Relations Between Edward I and Edward II of England and the Mongol Ilkhāns of Persia," *Iran* 6 (1968):

Ilkhans when the latter were seeking to form an alliance with the West.<sup>22</sup> It must be noted that in this period, the religious aspect—the attempt to bring the Mongols to the Christian faith—was as important in the papal diplomatic efforts as the political element: the struggle against the mutual enemy, the Mamluks of Egypt who were threatening the last Frankish colonies in Syria and Palestine as well as the Christian kingdom of Cilicia, which was allied to the Mongols.

A first group of letters includes Güyük's reply to two letters sent by Pope Innocent IV to "the King of the Tartars and his people" after the invasion of Eastern Europe, as well as the text of an edict.<sup>23</sup> We also have a letter addressed to Louis IX by the regent Oghul Qaimish, which has been preserved in a fragmentary state in Jean de Joinville's *Vie de Saint Louis*.<sup>24</sup> To these texts may be added Möngke's two letters.<sup>25</sup> The king of France was also the addressee of a letter, dated May 1248, forwarded or sent by Eljigidei, Güyük's representative to the Middle East. These first letters were written between 1246 and 1254. They are repetitive, consisting of straightforward invitations to submit fully and unconditionally to Mongol authority,<sup>26</sup> with the exception of Eljigidei's letter,

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23–31; Reuven Amitai, "Edward of England and Abagha Ilkhan. A Reexamination of a Failed Attempt at Mongol-Frankish Cooperation," in *Tolerance and Intolerance. Social Conflict in the Age of the Crusades*, eds. M. Gervers and J.M. Powell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), 75–84, notes, 160–163; Denis Sinor, "Les relations entre les Mongols et l'Europe jusqu'à la mort d'Arghoun et de Bela IV," 52–57; "The Mongols and the Western Europe"; Felicitas Schmieder, *Europa und die Fremden. Die Mongolen im Urteil des Abendlandes von 13. bis in das 15. Jahrhundert* (Thorbecke: Jan Thorbecke Verlag Sigmaringen, 1994), in particularly 103–105, 108; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 167–172, 174, 177, 179, 183–184.

22 They also sent letters to the princes and khans see Lupprian, to Sartaq n° 39, 209–212; to Berke Khan, n° 40, 213–215; to Qubilai, n° 47, 237–241 and n° 54, 255–257; to Qaidu, n° 55, 258–260.

23 In his first letter "*Dei patris immensa*," the Pope gives an account of the Christian doctrine, text in Lupprian, n° 20, 141–145; in the second "*Cum non solum omnes*," he threatens the Mongols with divine punishment should they again attack Western Christendom, text *ibid.*, n° 21, 146–149. On these papal letters, see Jean Richard, *La papauté et les missions d'Orient*, 70.

24 Jean de Joinville, 425.

25 Guillemus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 307–309.

26 On these letters, see Eric Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission," 378–413; Jean Richard, "Ultimatums mongols et textes apocryphes," 212–222; Peter Jackson, "World-Conquest and Local Accommodation," 3–22.

which I will consider separately.<sup>27</sup> A second group of documents consists of the Ilkhans' letters to Popes Gregory X (1271–76), Honorius IV (1285–87), Nicholas IV (1288–92) and Boniface VIII (1294–1303), and to the kings of France Louis IX and Philip the Fair.<sup>28</sup> In these letters, the Mongol sovereigns of Iran seek to establish relations with the Latin West. The first in this series of letters dates to 1262. It was sent by Hülegü two years after the defeat inflicted on a small detachment of Mongol troops by Mamluk forces at 'Ayn Jālūt in Palestine on 3 September 1260.<sup>29</sup> The last letter sent by an Ilkhan was addressed by Öljeitü to the king of France Philip the Fair in 1305.<sup>30</sup>

The vast majority of these diplomatic missives were written in Mongolian,<sup>31</sup> but very few originals have come down to us in that language. We have a small number of originals in Mongolian and Latin, as well as two contemporary translations. The letter sent by Güyük to Pope Innocent IV has come down to us thanks to the transmission of a Latin translation, but there also exists a Persian version, preserved in the form of an original document.<sup>32</sup> We also have one bilingual letter: on the reverse of the Mongolian text of Öljeitü's letter of 1305, addressed to Philip the Fair, there is a translation into Pisan Italian, which we will return to later. But the vast majority of the texts consist of contemporary Latin translations (whose Mongolian original have not survived), and of copies transmitted in the accounts of the Franciscan and Dominican missionaries or in chronicles. The original documents are all the more valu-

27 See Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," xxviii, 12–38; Jean Richard, "D'Ālğigidaï à Ġazan"; *Au-delà de la Perse*, 159–162; Denise Aigle, "The Letters of Eljigidei, Hülegü and Abaqa," 145–152.

28 John A. Boyle, "The Il-Khans of Persia and the Christian West," *History Today* 23/8 (1973): 554–563; "The Il-Khans of Persia and the Princes of Europe," *CAJ* 20/1–2 (1975): 25–40; Reuven Amitai, "Edward of England and Abagha Ilkhan," 75–82, notes, 160–163.

29 Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu, Il-Khan of Persia, to King Louis IX of France," *Viator* 11 (1980): 245–259. On this letter, see Jean Richard, "Une ambassade mongole à Paris en 1262?" *Journal des Savants* (1979): 295–303; *Au-delà de la Perse*, 175–187. Pope Urban IV replied to Hülegü in a letter dated March 23, 1263, asking him to convert to Roman Catholicism, Latin text in Lupprian, n° 41, 216–219.

30 *Les lettres de 1289 et 1305 des ilkhan Arjun et Öljeitü à Philippe le Bel*, eds. A. Mostaert and F.W. Cleaves (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1962), 55–85.

31 Mongolian was used as a diplomatic language. In Cairo, a Mongolian chancellery had been established, see Thomas T. Allsen, *The King's Dictionary*, 5–6.

32 This letter is preserved in the Secret Archives of the Vatican. The document has been reproduced with commentary and translation by Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," xxiii: 17–18.

able because they allow us, albeit within certain limits, to evaluate the Latin versions by comparison.

The “hybrid” nature of the corpus certainly makes its use a delicate task. It is to some degree the result of the fortunes that led to the preservation of some documents and not of others, although, as we shall see later, this factor too must be considered with caution. In these conditions, the historian must pay careful attention to the problem of the representativeness and possible distortion of the original documents, even though, as a product of the Mongol chancelleries, they are of undeniable importance. These documents enable us to compare the epistolary norms and symbolism found therein with those of the “transmitted” documents. The composition of a corpus, as Arnold Esch has clearly shown, is a “social fact,” or indeed a “historical fact,” as every age had its own reasons for preserving or destroying particular items.<sup>33</sup> This observation can be confirmed in the constitution of the papal archives in the thirteenth century. As Thomas Tanase rightly notes: “The construction of an archival [. . .] practice is not a neutral, mechanical act, but constitutes a choice [. . .] which is guided by the vision of the institution which establishes the archives.”<sup>34</sup>

Equally, in the Muslim world, it is well known that the original documents of the Mamluk chancelleries disappeared because they were sold by weight as paper for re-use.<sup>35</sup> To avoid the pitfall of over-interpreting the corpus of original documents, the texts must therefore be placed in their political and cultural context. Can we, for instance, observe changes in the norms of composition of the diplomatic correspondence of the Mongol rulers of Iran after their conversion to Islam? If we consider the case of the letters exchanged between the latter and the Mamluk sultans,<sup>36</sup> we may observe that the norms of composition and religious references are adapted to the Muslim addressee,<sup>37</sup> but that

33 See Arnold Esch, “Chance et hasard de transmission. Le problème de la *représentativité* et de la *déformation* de la transmission historique,” in *Les tendances actuelles de l'histoire du Moyen Âge en France et en Allemagne*, eds. J.-Cl. Schmitt and O. Oexle (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2003), 15–29.

34 Thomas Tanase, “Les Mongols et le monde dans les registres de la papauté au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle. L'écriture d'une histoire,” in *La correspondance entre souverains. Approches croisées entre l'Orient musulman, l'Occident latin et Byzance (XIII<sup>e</sup>–début XVI<sup>e</sup> s.)*, eds. D. Aigle and S. Péquignot (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 77–100.

35 Frédéric Bauden, “Du destin des lettres diplomatiques en Islam. Analyse des données et éléments de réponse,” in *La correspondance entre souverains. Approches croisées entre l'Orient musulman, l'Occident latin et Byzance (XIII<sup>e</sup>–début XVI<sup>e</sup> s.)*, 27–49.

36 With a few exceptions, all these letters have been preserved in a corpus of copies.

37 The arguments of the Ilkhans' letters, even before their conversion to Islam, are illustrated with a profusion of Qur'anic citations.

the political ideology conveyed in the letters remains almost identical before and after conversion. In addition to the difficulty of representativeness of the sources, the present-day historian must confront another pitfall: that of cultural difference. Between the document and its would-be analyst is interposed the “dense history” of its transmission, which must be taken into account if we are to grasp the meaning of the text as a whole. Particular attention must be paid to the role of the translator, his origins and his own system of representations. We will thus be able to study the Mongol political ideology better, which can be found in these letters, even though they have passed through the prism of various transmitters.

Different intermediaries were responsible for the translation of these letters at the time of the Great Khans and at the time of the Ilkhans. Let us consider, for example, John of Plano Carpini, who in his account of his journey clearly explains how he and his companion Benedict Polonus relayed the letters of Pope Innocent IV and Güyük’s response. There were several Russians and Hungarians at the latter’s court who knew Latin and French, as well as Russian clerics (*Rutenos plures Ungaros et scientes latinum et gallicum et clericos Rutenos*) and other persons who, having lived among the Mongols for many years, understood their language and acted as interpreters.<sup>38</sup> John of Plano Carpini informs us that their intermediary in dealing with Güyük was a certain Temer, a soldier of Iaroslav, the late prince of Suzdal. At this time, therefore, interpreters were responsible for the transmission of “word of mouth” and the translation of diplomatic correspondence. Oral messages were often more important than the letters themselves, as they were supposed to convey information too sensitive to leave any written trace. Here is what the Franciscan missionary wrote concerning the translation of Güyük’s letter to the Pope:

On the day of blessed Martin, we were called again, and Cadac,<sup>39</sup> Chinqai (Chingay)<sup>40</sup> and Bala visited us [. . .]. They interpreted the letter for us, word for word (*de verbo ad verbum interpretati fuerunt*). And because we

38 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 122–123; *Storia dei Mongoli*, 324. In classical Mongolian, the term for an interpreter is *kelemürchi*, derived from the root *kele-*: “to speak,” see Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 447.

39 In the Latin text, the secretary’s name appears in two different forms: Kadac and Cadac.

40 Chinqai (d. 1252) was in service of Ögödei and Güyük, see Paul D. Buell, “Činqai,” in *In the service of the Khan: Eminent personalities of the Early Mongol-Yuan Period (1200–1300)*, ed. Igor de Rachewiltz (Wiesbaden, 1992), 95–111, and a short biography in Paul D. Buell, *Historical Dictionary of the Mongol World Empire* (Lanham & Maryland & Oxford: The Scarecrow Press, 2003), 138.

wrote in Latin (*et cum scripsissemus in latino*), they had us interpret for them each single statement, eager to know if we erred in some word for another [. . .]. They made us read (our translation) once and twice [. . .]. They retranslated the letters (the Mongol original and the Latin translation) into Persian, so that someone might be found in those parts capable of reading them, if the Lord Pope so wished!<sup>41</sup>

This last phrase is probably an allusion to the fact that the preaching orders, in particular the Dominicans, were required to study oriental languages such as Persian and Arabic.<sup>42</sup>

The account given by Simon of St Quentin informs us still further as to the process by which diplomatic correspondence was translated. He found himself with Ascelino of Cremona at the camp of Baiju, Güyük's representative in Azerbaijan and Armenia. The Dominican writes that with the assistance of the Brothers and other interpreters there present, the Pope's letters were written down in Persian (*mediantibus fratribus et aliis interpretibus ibidem astantibus littere pape in persica lingua scriberentur*). They were then brought back to Baiju, and translated again from Persian into Mongolian (*de persico in tartaricum*),<sup>43</sup> then read aloud. Jean Richard puts forward the hypothesis that the Dominicans had probably translated the letters from Latin into French so that the Greek and Turkic translators might translate them into Persian.<sup>44</sup> It was fairly easy to find translators in contact zones such as the region where Baiju was set, where there were ethnic groups who were at least bilingual.

This method of translation via interpreters is also mentioned by William of Rubruc who relayed Möngke's letter and edict to Louis IX: "When the letter was at least finished, they summoned me and translated it. I have written down the sense of it, as far as I could grasp it thought the interpreter."<sup>45</sup>

In the Ilkhans' entourage, by contrast, there were persons who could translate diplomatic correspondence directly. They appear to have worked in collaboration with the Mongol chancellery. The many letters in Latin, which have come down to us correspond closely to the typical preambles to the Great

41 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 123–124; *Storia dei Mongoli*, 325. The phrase "in Saracen" should here be understood as meaning "in Persian," as indicated by the Persian version of the letter. The Latin text is transmitted by Benedict Polonus, *De itinere ad Tartaros*, in *Sinica franciscana* 1:142–143 and by Salimbene di Adam, *Cronica* 1:313–314.

42 On the Dominicans and the study of oriental languages, see *infra*.

43 Simon of St Quentin, 106.

44 Jean Richard, *Au-delà de la Perse*, 149, n. 10.

45 Guillelmus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 307.



Khans' ultimatums. The Latin of these letters is often laden down with many words of Mongolian origin as well as with proper names, many of them difficult to reconstruct, the more so as the same name may appear in various spellings. Thomas Allsen notes the same issue with regard to the letters sent by the chancelleries of the Golden Horde and of those of its client state, the principality of Moscow. In these dependent chancelleries of the Golden Horde, the translations of Mongolian originals were very literal, with many calques and uses of Mongolian terminology.<sup>46</sup>

In the diplomatic exchanges between the Ilkhans and Western rulers, we find interpreters of various origins in the embassies. There are, for example, Nestorian Christians such as one Salomon Arkaun<sup>47</sup> who was the bearer of a letter from Abaqa to Pope Clement IV in 1268. Two further such figures are even better known: ʿĪsā *kelemechi* (ʿĪsā, the interpreter)<sup>48</sup> and the famous Nestorian monk Rabban Ṣawma who visited Europe as Arghun's ambassador in 1287–88. He left us an account of his voyage to Persia and Europe, which is a unique account, for the period, of a traveller from the Far East to the West.<sup>49</sup> According to Pier Griogio Borbone, Rabban Ṣawma spoke Persian—as that was the language in which he composed his account of his mission—, Syriac, Turkic, and, no doubt, Arabic. In addition, as he frequented European merchants and missionaries operating in Iran, he must have known some Western languages.<sup>50</sup> These figures probably acted as intermediaries in the translation of the letters, but this is not attested in our sources. One also finds Latins, both clerics and laymen, who had entered the service of the Mongols of Iran, such as the many Italian merchants residing in Tabriz and at the camp of the Ilkhans.<sup>51</sup> They

46 Thomas T. Allsen, "The *Rasūlid Hexaglot* in its Eurasian Cultural Context," in *The King's Dictionary*, 39; see also, Istvan Vasary, "Mongolian Impact on the Terminology of Documents of the Golden Horde," *AOASH* 48 (1995): 479–485.

47 *Arkaun* is a corruption of the Mongolian *erke'ün* which refers to the Nestorian priests and, by extension, all religious functionaries, see Doerfer 1:123–125.

48 Qubilai's official translator arrived in Iran in 1285. On his activities, see Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 60, 97, 107.

49 On Rabban Ṣawma and his account of his travels, see *Un ambassadeur du Khan Argun en Occident. Histoire de Mar Yahballaha et de Rabban Sauma (1281–1317)*, ed. Pier G. Borbone (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), and n. 129, *infra*. On Rabban Ṣawma, see also Morris Rossabi, *Voyager from Xanadu. Rabban Sauma and the First Journey From China to the West* (Tokyo & New York & London: Kodansha International, 1992). On interpreters under the Ilkhans, see Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 173–175.

50 *Un ambassadeur du Khan Argun en Occident*, 215.

51 On the Italian merchants in the service of the Mongols, see Luciano Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'Empire mongol," *JA* 250 (1962): 549–574; Jean Richard, "Isol

were both translators and interpreters, and are mentioned amongst the members of the embassy charged with bringing the letter to the West. The Ilkhans' first diplomatic opening to Europe was a letter sent by Hülegü to the king of France, Louis IX, in 1262.<sup>52</sup> The translator's name is not mentioned in the text. However, in a letter sent by Abaqa to Pope Gregory X in 1274, the name of a notary, Richard, appears. He claims to have been Hülegü's interpreter and a member of the embassy charged with bringing his letter to the West: "Amongst them was I, Richard, notary and interpreter of the said kings and princes, and interpreter of the Latins."<sup>53</sup>

A certain Johannes Ungarus was entrusted with the embassy. His name is also mentioned in a letter from Pope Urban IV to Hülegü, dated 23 May 1263.<sup>54</sup> The embassy is attested in a passage from a chronicle composed around the year 1265 by a Franciscan of Erfurt, who states that among the Ilkhan's envoys were two Dominicans who acted as interpreters, but whose names are unknown.<sup>55</sup> In Abaqa's letter, the role of a certain Brother David as Hülegü's advisor on policy towards the West is emphasized. This brother is none other than the English Dominican David of Ashbly, who had gone to the Ilkhan's court in 1260 and long remained there.<sup>56</sup> For some years, the authorities of the Dominican order had recommended the teaching of oriental languages to missionaries. The Papacy considered it its duty to make known to the various eastern Christian communities, in their own languages, the religious obligations to which they were bound.<sup>57</sup> The Dominicans seem to have been influential in the pro-Western policy of the first Ilkhans.<sup>58</sup> This influence, however, remains a hypothesis: the Eastern Christians in the entourage of the Mongol rulers of Iran may also have been favourable to an understanding with the West.<sup>59</sup>

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le Pisan: un aventurier Franc gouverneur d'une province mongole?" *CAJ* 14/1-3, (1970): 186-194.

52 The letter is dated Marāgha, the 10 April of the Year of the Dog, corresponding to 1262, see Jean Richard, "Une ambassade mongole à Paris en 1262?" 295.

53 Lupprian, n° 44, 230.

54 Lupprian, n° 41, 217. See also, Jean Richard, "Une ambassade mongole à Paris en 1262?" 297.

55 Jean Richard, "Une ambassade mongole à Paris en 1262?" 298, 301.

56 Jean Richard, "Une ambassade mongole à Paris en 1262?" 299-301; "The Mongols and the Franks," *Journal of Asian History* 3/1 (1969): 53; *Au-delà de la Perse*, 185-187. David of Ashbly drew up a short treatise for the Council of Lyons entitled: *Les faits des Tartares*, French translation by Jean Richard *ibid.*, 188-190.

57 Jean Richard, "L'enseignement des langues orientales," 150.

58 Jean Richard, "Une ambassade mongole à Paris en 1262?" 301.

59 Jean Richard, *Au-delà de la Perse*, 185.

To return to Hülegü's letter, it appears to have been translated directly into Latin from a Mongolian original, without passing through Persian as was often the practice and as is evidenced by the example of Simon of St Quentin cited above.<sup>60</sup> Before the Ilkhanid period, Persian appears as the *lingua franca* of diplomatic exchanges with the West. Paul Meyvaert, who discovered Hülegü's letter in a fourteenth-century manuscript in the National Library in Vienna and published it, states that it was originally written in Latin.<sup>61</sup> The letter is, however, entirely consistent with the phraseology of Mongol diplomatic correspondence. The translator, Richard the notary, illustrates the missive with Biblical quotations intended to make its content intelligible to the Pope. The purpose of a translation is to render a message comprehensible to a recipient who, without the translation, would not be able to understand it. This happened when the Ilkhan Abaqa sent a letter in Mongolian to Pope Clement IV. In 1267, the latter replied that nobody at the papal court had been able to read or understand it.<sup>62</sup> Abaqa apologized to the Pope, saying that his Latin translator (*scriba noster Latinus*), in other words Richard the notary, was away at the time.<sup>63</sup>

At the time of Arghun, the name of Richard the notary no longer appears in the diplomatic correspondence or as a member of the embassies. Instead another name, Ugeto, appears in various Latin spellings. The first occurrence of this name is in a letter sent by Arghun to Pope Honorius IV, the king of France and Charles of Anjou, dated 18 May 1285. He is listed among the members of the embassy in the form "*Ugeto terciman*" that is, Ugeto the interpreter.<sup>64</sup> He appears again in a letter from Nicholas IV dated 2 April 1288, this time as "*Ugetus interpres*," Ugetus the interpreter,<sup>65</sup> and then in a further letter from the same pope in the form "*Ugetto interprete, laicis*."<sup>66</sup> Finally, his name also appears in a letter from Nicholas IV, dated 7 April 1288, this time addressed to the Nestorian patriarch Mar Yahballaha III, in the form "*Ugetus, interpres*."<sup>67</sup>

60 Jean Richard, *Au-delà de la Perse*, 182.

61 Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknow Letter of Hulagu, Il-khan of Persia," 250.

62 Lupprian, n° 42, 221.

63 Lupprian, n° 43, 224.

64 Lupprian, n° 49, 246. The Latin *terciman* is a corruption of the Arabic word *turjumān*, which had entered Persian, and referred to interpreters and translators. The same term appears in French in the form *drogman*. The term *drogamandus* is attested from the time of the First Crusade, referring to Latin Christians who could translate from Arabic and Syriac into Greek, see Jean Richard, "L'enseignement des langues orientales," 153.

65 Lupprian, n° 50, 248.

66 Lupprian, n° 53, 254.

67 *Histoire de Mar Jabalaha III et du moine Rabban Çauma*, French trans. J.-B. Chabot (Paris: Ernest Leroux, 1895), 577.

Denis Sinor notes the similarity between this name, Ugeto, and the Mongolian term *ügetü*, derived from the root *üge-*, word. In Mongolian, *ügetü* literally means: "having many words, a rich vocabulary, eloquent"<sup>68</sup> and could be understood as the sobriquet of one who knew many languages. But Denis Sinor says that he was unable to establish for sure whether Arghun's interpreter bore a Mongol sobriquet that had been bestowed upon him by virtue of his activity as an interpreter.<sup>69</sup> It is more likely that this Ugeto, described as a layman, was one of the many Italian merchants in the entourage of the Ilkhans in Azerbaijan.<sup>70</sup>

### The Period of the Great Khans: Unconditional Submission

I shall examine the preambles of a selection of letters and edicts sent by the Great Khans to Pope Innocent IV and to the king of France Louis IX. We may leave Eljigidei's letter aside for the moment. One notes that, when compared to the Persian version of Güyük's letter to Innocent IV in 1246, the Latin translations of these preambles conform to the traditional Mongol formulation. They always begin with the invocation of Eternal Heaven (Latin: *eterni Dei*). Turkic was used for the preamble of the Persian letter. That preamble has been analysed by Paul Pelliot, who has compared its text to the Mongolian-language seal, which appears on it in two places. Pelliot has shown that the letter's Turkic formula, "With the strength of Eternal Heaven, [we] the oceanic Khan of all the great people; our order" corresponds to the Mongolian inscription on the seal: "With the strength of Eternal Heaven, from the oceanic Khan of the people of the great Mongols: the order."<sup>71</sup> Paul Pelliot explains the phrase "the oceanic Khan" as meaning the Khan of the seas.<sup>72</sup> In fact, these terms express the idea that the Great Khan is the lord and master of all that lies within the seas that form the bounds of the earth and encircle it. A comparison of this preamble with that of Möngke's letter to Louis IX—for which we have only a Latin translation—shows us that the Latin formulas are practically a verbatim translation of the Turkic ones: "By the strength of Eternal God (*Per virtutem eterni Dei*), by the great people of the Mongols, the order of Möngke Khan

68 Lessing, *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, 996.

69 Denis Sinor, "Interpreters in Medieval Inner Asia," *Asian and African Studies* 16 (1982): 295–296.

70 Luciano Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'Empire mongol," 561.

71 Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," XXIII:24.

72 Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," XXIII:25.

(*preceptum Manguchan*).<sup>73</sup> The Latin translation strictly respects the phraseology of Mongol diplomatic correspondence: evidence that at the time of the Great Khans, the language specialists who carried out the translation had a good knowledge of Mongol political ideology, and that the process of transmission does not appear to have affected the general meaning of the original document.

In Güyük's edict, sent to the Pope through Baiju in 1247, and in that of Möngke, addressed to the king of France in 1254,<sup>74</sup> Genghis Khan is presented as the "son of God." In the first case, we find the formula:

By the order of the living God, Genghis Khan, sweet and venerable son of God (*Cingischam, filius Dei dulcis et venerabilis*), states that God (is) over everything himself immortal God and over Earth Genghis Khan the only lord and master (*et super terram Cingischam solus dominus*).<sup>75</sup>

In Möngke's edict, a very similar formula appears: "This is the order of eternal God: In Heaven there is none but one eternal God, over Earth let there not be but one lord and master Genghis Khan, son of God."<sup>76</sup>

The appearance of Genghis Khan's name in these two edicts, both promulgated well after his death, has given rise to some debate.<sup>77</sup> The documents, as Eric Voegelin has clearly shown, had legal value.<sup>78</sup> It seems to me that since these were orders for general submission, the most obvious authority to invoke was the command issued by Genghis Khan, founder of the empire. He is referred to here as the "son of God," in other words the "son of Eternal Heaven."

As indicated at the beginning, this title has its origin in the *Secret History*, where Alan Qo'a states that the Mongol rulers will be the "sons of Heaven." Why have Heaven, in these Latin texts, become God? There is, after all, a Latin word for heaven. In fact, the Christians interpreted the Heaven of the Mongols in a metaphorical sense. I will give two examples. John of Plano Carpini observes:

73 Guillelmus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 308.

74 William of Rubruc copied two successive documents without distinguishing between an edict (*Itinerarium*, 307) and a letter (*Itinerarium*, 308). A comparison between the beginning of Güyük's edict and that of Möngke's turns up the same formulas, with only a few differences, but they do not correspond to the formulas of the usual preambles.

75 Simon of St Quentin, 115–116.

76 Guillelmus de Rubruc, *Itinerarium*, 307.

77 Discussion on Pelliot's interpretation by Eric Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission," 396. Pelliot ascribes this to an interpolation or a copyist's error.

78 Eric Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission," 403.

They believe in one God, who is the creator of all things seen and unseen, and they believe that he provides all good and all sorrow in this world. Yet they do not honour him by means of prayers [...] or any rites whatsoever.<sup>79</sup>

The idea that the Mongol khans were the “sons of God” is present in other sources apart from diplomatic correspondence. For example, here is Simon of St Quentin describing the religion of the Mongols:

Their impiety and their arrogance are such that they call their lord, the *chaam*, son of God (*dominum suum chaam filium Dei apellat*), and they adore him and venerate him in place of God on Earth [...]. For, for one thing, the *chaam* calls himself son of God and he styles himself thus in his letters when he issues his commands to everyone.<sup>80</sup>

The idea that Genghis Khan was considered the son of God by the Mongols is also present in the Islamic sources, as, for example, in a *fatwā* by Ibn Taymiyya, drawn up after Ghazan Khan's invasions of Syria. He writes: “They believe that Genghis Khan is the “son of God” (*Ibn Allāh*), similar to what the Christians believe about the Messiah.”<sup>81</sup>

Turning to the content of these letters and edicts, one observes that it is quite unwavering: unconditional submission to the Mongols, in accordance with the mandate of Heaven which has granted them the entire surface of the Earth from the rising to the setting of the sun. Those who do not respect God's order are chastised and annihilated. A close examination of Güyük's reply to the letters sent to him by Pope Innocent IV via his missionaries confirms that the latter missives had been perfectly understood in Qaraqorum, and must therefore have been well translated. The Great Khan replies point by point to the pope's proposals. The Supreme Pontiff's offer of peace is rejected. Güyük says that he has not understood what it is that the Pope asks in inviting him to receive baptism and become Christian (*quod debemus baptizari et effici Christiani*).<sup>82</sup> The reason for the invasion of Eastern Europe is then clearly set

79 *Ystoria mongalorum*, 36; *Storia dei Mongoli*, 236.

80 Simon of St Quentin, 34.

81 *Majmū' fatāwā* xxviii:521–522.

82 Lupprian, n° 32, 184. In the Persian letter, there appears a term of Mongol origin, *silam* (Persian, *shilam*) which refers to conversion to Christianity: “You told me that if I entered the *shilam* it would be well”; Persian text reproduced by Paul Pelliot, “Les Mongols et la papauté,” xxiii (1922–23): 17. A. Mostaert and F.W. Cleaves have queried Pelliot's analysis of the term *shilam*. The latter linked it to the Mongolian root *silemdē*—“to moisten, soak in

out. The Great Khan justifies his capture of Christian territories (*Pollonorum, Moravorum et Ungarorum*)<sup>83</sup> on the grounds that the inhabitants have not respected the order of Genghis Khan and the Khan<sup>84</sup> (*precepto Cyngin-Chan et Chan non obedierunt*)<sup>85</sup> for that reason God Eternal has to exterminate them. To this refusal to obey is added, in this letter, a further grievance: the ambassadors of the Great Khan have been killed (*nuncios occiderunt*).<sup>86</sup> The pope is invited to come in person to Güyük's court to submit to Mongol authority.<sup>87</sup> The content of the Latin and Persian versions of Güyük's reply is excellent evidence of the reliability of the translations, despite the necessity of using numerous intermediate languages to communicate. The processes adopted to effect a translation, as described *supra*, bear witness to that necessity.

The content of Eljigidei's letter, which has been transmitted by, *inter alia*,<sup>88</sup> Odon of Chateauroux in a letter addressed to the pope,<sup>89</sup> is not in line with the ideology expressed in the other documents. In this text, although it is inspired by the usages of the Mongol chancelleries, there is no demand that the king of France submit to the Great Khan. But, if we examine the terms of the letter more closely, Güyük is "the king of the Earth" (*Rex terrae*), while Louis IX is "the magnificent king" (*Rex magnificus*).<sup>90</sup> The latter, therefore, is not the Great Khan's equal:

We come with the power and mandate that all Christians be free from servitude and tribute (*omnes christiani sint liberi a servitute et tributo*) [. . .], and that [their] destroyed churches be rebuilt [. . .], and no one dare

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water" and ascribes to it the meaning of baptism. As it is not a Persian term, one may suggest that it could have entered Persian from Mongolian via Syriac. The Mongols later applied it to the Muslim fast of the month of Ramaḍān, see Antoine Mostaert and Francis W. Cleaves, "Trois documents mongols des Archives secrètes vaticanes," *HJAS* 15/3-4 (1952): 459-460.

83 Lupprian, n° 32, 184.

84 The Great Khan in question is the one then reigning, in other words, Ögödei.

85 Lupprian, n° 32, 186.

86 Lupprian, n° 32, 186. Here, by contrast to the ultimatum addressed to Bela IV, it is not mentioned that the latter had received Cumans subjects of the Great Khan in his lands.

87 Lupprian, n° 32, 186. In the Persian letter, the two terms appear in opposition to refer to subjected (*īlī*) and rebellious (*yāghī*) peoples, equivalent to the Mongolian *el* and *bulga*.

88 Eljigidei's letter survives in a number of Latin and French versions. Here the version transmitted by Odon of Chateauroux is used.

89 Odon of Chateauroux, in *Spicilegium*, ed. L. d'Archery (Paris, 1723), vol. 3, 624-628.

90 *Spicilegium*, 625.

prohibit that [a Christian] pray with glad, peaceful heart for our reign [...]. In his letter the king of the Earth has decreed that in the law of God (*in lege Dei*) there is no difference between Latins and Greeks and Armenians and Nestorians and Jacobites, and all those that worship the cross. All of them are one to us (*omnes enim sunt unum apud nos*).<sup>91</sup>

This letter was brought to Louis IX in 1248,<sup>92</sup> when he was staying in Nicosia in the company of the Dominican Andrew of Longjumeau, by an embassy which included a number of Christians from Mawşil, among them a certain David.<sup>93</sup> The latter were charged with delivering an oral message announcing good tidings.<sup>94</sup> They told the king that Güyük had converted to Christianity on the feast of the Epiphany along with a great many of his senior military officials, that he had a Christian mother<sup>95</sup> who was the daughter of the king called Prester John (*filiam regis qui vocatur Presbyter Joannes*), and that he intended to capture Baghdad the following year. He called upon the king of France for military assistance to prevent the Mamluk sultan coming to the assistance of the caliph.<sup>96</sup>

Odon of Chateauroux, who was present when the letter was handed over, says that it had been drafted directly in Persian (*scriptas lingua Persica et literis Arabicis*) and that Andrew of Longjumeau translated it into Latin word for word (*de verbo ad verbum*).<sup>97</sup> The tone of this letter, so different from that the Great Khan had sent to Pope Innocent IV two years earlier, has led to doubt as to its authenticity. Did the letter really come from Güyük, and had it then been transmitted to Louis IX through Eljigidei? Or should it be treated as a forgery, plain and simple? Several clues suggest that it was drawn up at the behest of Christians of northern Mesopotamia, where the Great Khan's representative was stationed. First of all, Odon of Chateauroux mentions that it was

91 *Spicilegium*, 625.

92 The letter is dated to the month of Muḥarram 646/April–May 1248.

93 On this embassy, see Paul Pelliot, "Les Mongols et la papauté," XXVIII (1922–23): 12–30; Jean Richard, *Au-delà de la Perse*, 159–173. These were the Christians of Mosul whom Mōngke described as liars in his letter to Louis IX, see *infra*.

94 *Spicilegium*, 625.

95 We have no proof that she was Christian, but she was well disposed towards the Christians. On Törege, see Paul D. Buell, *Historical Dictionary*, 149. On the Great Khan's Christianity, see Jean Richard, "La lettre du connétable Smbat et les rapports entre chrétiens et Mongols au milieu du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Armenian Studies. Études arméniennes. In Memoriam Haig Berberian*, ed. D. Kouymjian (Lisbonne, 1986), 683–696.

96 *Spicilegium*, 625.

97 *Spicilegium*, 627.



written directly in Persian, and the Latin translation which has been preserved does indeed seem a calque from that language: it faithfully reflects oriental phraseology. Why would a letter have been drafted in Persian in Qaraqorum? We have shown that at the time of the Great Khans, diplomatic correspondence was written in Mongolian, and then translated into Latin or Persian so that it could be understood by the addressee. It is possible that this letter was drawn up at Eljigidei's behest by Christians of his entourage who were familiar with Mongol diplomatic practices. Güyük's representative was trying to find out Louis IX's real intentions, and, to give his letter added authenticity, he claims the mandate of the Great Khan (*missi a rege terrae Gan*).<sup>98</sup> One may, therefore, suspect that this letter was not actually sent by Güyük. In fact, an Eastern Christian origin seems to me the most plausible hypothesis. Their aim was to prevent the papacy, through the intercession of the Franks, from taxing these communities and imposing restrictions on their religious practices.<sup>99</sup> As Jean Richard emphasizes, Eljigidei's letter displays similarities to that addressed by the Nestorian prelate, Simeon Rabban Ata, to Louis IX<sup>100</sup> and which Andrew of Longjumeau had brought back from his first mission to the East in 1247.<sup>101</sup> In this letter, Simeon Rabban Ata requested the French king's goodwill towards the Nestorian monks of the Holy Land (*fratribus nostris habitantibus in Terra santa*).<sup>102</sup>

In response to this Mongol embassy, Louis IX sent Andrew of Longjumeau, one of his confreres and several clerics to Qaraqorum to congratulate Güyük on his conversion to Christianity and to deliver him presents, notably a scarlet chapel.<sup>103</sup> To help bring the Khan's subjects to the Christian faith, he had had embroidered on the chapel depictions of the Annunciation, the Nativity, all the episodes of the Passion, the Ascension, and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

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98 *Spicilegium*, 627. The meaning of this formula is discussed by Eric Voegelin, "The Mongol Orders of Submission," 401–402.

99 On the involvement of Christians in the composition of this letter, see Denise Aigle, "The Letters of Eljigidei, Hülegü, and Abaqa," 155–157.

100 Jean Richard, *Au-delà de la Perse*, 162.

101 Simeon Rabban Ata entrusted three letters to Andrew of Longjumeau: one for Pope Innocent IV, one for Frederick II, and one for Louis IX. The last was dated Tabriz, autumn 1246. On the latter two letters, see Pierre-Vincent Claverie, "Deux lettres inédites," 283–292.

102 Pierre-Vincent Claverie, "Deux lettres inédites," 291.

103 The term "scarlet" comes from the twelfth-century medieval Latin *scarlatum*, from the Persian *saqirlat*. It refers to a bright red colour derived from cochineal, or to a fabric dyed such a colour, thus indicating that the chapel was embroidered.

He also sent chalices, books and two preaching monks to chant the mass.<sup>104</sup> But in the meantime Güyük had died, and his wife, Oghul Qaimish, was regent. Imagining that the embassy was bringing a tribute in token of a spontaneous submission, she sent a letter to the king of France, accompanied by presents:

A good thing is the peace [. . .]; and this is what we are sending you that you may be advised, for you cannot have peace unless you have it with us [. . .]. We do decree that you send us so much of your gold and your silver each year, if you hold it back from us, we shall do what we did to those whom we had named before.<sup>105</sup>

Peace between the king of France and the Mongols required first and foremost that the former be reduced to the status of tributary. This text is probably quite distant from the original, as it has been transmitted in old French in a later source, but it is the only one to attest to Andrew of Longjumeau's mission. The information on the Mongols, which frames its account of the Dominican's stay in Qaraqorum, is woven about with legends. Yet the letter, mutilated and fragmentary though it is, corresponds closely to all the letters sent to the West by the Great Khans. Several years later, Möngke addressed the same message to Louis IX. In this letter, he accuses David, one of Güyük's ambassadors, of lying (*mendax erat*) and anathematizes Oghul Qaimish for having treated the king of France's embassy well:

Camus, his wife, sent you *nasic*<sup>106</sup> cloth and a letter. But as for knowing the business of war and the affairs of peace (*res bellicas et negotia pacis*), subduing the wide world and discerning how to act for the best—what could that worthless woman, lower than a bitch, have known of this (*illa mulier nequam, vilior quam canis, quomodo scire potuisset*)?<sup>107</sup>

104 Jean de Joinville, 425.

105 The text of this letter has survived in fragmentary form in the account of Andrew of Longjumeau's mission transmitted by Jean de Joinville, 436.

106 On this term, see English translation from *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, 190, n. 4.

107 *Itinerarium*, 308; *The Mission of Friar William of Rubruck*, 249. Möngke's opinion of the regent Oghul Qaimish reflects the power struggles that preceded his election as the new Great Khan, in which she supported the rival lineage. On these wars of succession between the different branches of Genghis Kkan' line, see Thomas T. Allsen, *Mongol Imperialism*, 18–44.

In the diplomatic language of the Great Khans of Mongolia, peace meant unconditional submission. This was a diplomacy of non-negotiation: to avoid outright destruction, the only option was to submit to Mongol authority.

### The Period of the Ilkhans: Was Negotiation Possible?

Hülegü's letter to Louis IX and Pope Urban IV in 1262, proposing an alliance against the Muslims, seems to mark a turning point in relations between the Mongols and the West.<sup>108</sup> The famous notary Richard had written this letter in Latin. As we have remarked, little is known of this celebrated Richard, but he was undoubtedly a cultivated Frank who was familiar with the Bible. Hülegü's letter, indeed, begins by way of preamble with a quotation from the Letter to the Hebrews (1:1): "In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son." But the formula (*in filio*) of the Biblical quotation is replaced by "Genghis Khan through Teb Tengri" (*Chingischan per Temptemgri*), implying that the Great Khan is the son of God, that is, of Heaven. There then follows a citation from Jeremiah (1:10): "I have this day set thee over nations and over the kingdoms [. . .]." But this time, the statement of the heavenly mandate granted to Genghis Khan preceded the biblical citation:

He made known to him by this Teb Tengri this message: "In Heaven, I am the one almighty God and I have set you over nations and kingdoms, master and king in every place (*In excelsis ego sum deus omnipotens solus*)."<sup>109</sup>

Richard the notary makes use of these Biblical citations to present the Mongol political ideology in a language that could be understood by those to whom the letter was addressed, subtly combining the Biblical texts with the usual

<sup>108</sup> Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu," 252–259. Hülegü had also tried to combine with the Latin princes of the Near East. Bohemond V of Antioch had joined with the king of Armenia's forces and entered Damascus with the Mongols, see Jean Richard, "La coopération militaire entre Francs et Mongols à l'épreuve: les campagnes de Ghazan en Syrie," in *Florilegia Altaica: Studies in Honour of Denis Sinor on the Occasion of His 70th Birthday*, eds. E.V. Boikova and G. Stary (Wiebaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 119; see also the recent study of Thomas Tanase, *Jusqu'aux limites du monde: La papauté et la mission franciscaine, de l'Asie de Marco Polo à l'Amérique de Christophe Colomb* (Rome: École française de Rome, 2013), chapter "La papauté, les Franciscains et les Il-Khans: alliance sacrifiée et espoirs missionnaires," 323–373.

<sup>109</sup> Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu," 252.

Mongol preambles. The emphasis in the beginning of the letter on the divine mandate granted to Genghis Khan, and then to Hülegü, is in keeping with the Mongol conception of power:

We Hülegü, then, with the strength of Eternal Heaven, that is, of the living God, chief of the army of the Mongols eager to devastate [...] the Saracens, benevolent supporter of the Christian faith [...], to the illustrious king of the Franks [...]. We inform you that you must unhesitatingly obey us, who lay claim to the command of the living God, especially since you will consider our power to have been granted to us by the same Eternal Heaven, that is the living God (*potestatem nostram ab ipso Mengutengri id est deo vivo*). We make known to you several examples [...] of what befell [...] those who [...] opposed our commands, which are, furthermore, those of the living God.<sup>110</sup>

In order to obtain the military support he needed, Hülegü wrote to his addressees that he understood that the Pope occupied the place on Earth of the *Misicatengrin*,<sup>111</sup> and that he had therefore ordered that the holy city of Jerusalem be taken back from the infidels and restored to the Supreme Pontiff.<sup>112</sup>

While presenting himself as the destroyer of the Muslims and the friend of Christendom, Hülegü in this letter formulates an implicit demand for submission, invoking in the Biblical quotations of his preamble the mandate of Eternal Heaven. Furthermore, having recalled all the conquests of the Mongols, he alludes to Louis IX's embassy to Güyük, but in terms which put the king of France in a position of inferiority:

You took care to send the Great Khan Güyük<sup>113</sup> by your messengers your chapel to the honour of the almighty living God, although we had not yet sent you our ambassadors and you had received nothing from us.<sup>114</sup>

110 Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu," 253.

111 One should note here the combination of the two terms, *Misica* which, in the letters, refers to Christ (the Messiah), and the *tenggeri*, the Heaven of the Mongols. The origin of the term *Misica* may very well be Syriac. One might compare *Misica* to "*mshihā*" meaning Christ or Messiah, see *Thesaurus Syriacus*, 2239–2240.

112 Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu," 258.

113 In the Latin text edited by Paul Meyvaert (*ibid.*, 257) it is question of Genghis Khan (*Crinizcham*) not of Güyük, perhaps an error of the copyist or the editor.

114 Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu," 257–258.

But to soften the effect of his words, Hülegü adds that this gesture was the sign of a friendship that would be renewed by a still stronger bond.<sup>115</sup> Despite the promise that the holy city of Jerusalem would be restored to the Pope, Louis IX did not pursue this offer of an alliance.

Abaqa, Hülegü's successor, continued his father's policy of rapprochement with the West. He sent several letters, of which we have only Latin translations. He wrote a letter in Mongolian to Pope Clement IV which has not been preserved, but which we know of thanks to the Pontiff's reply of 1267,<sup>116</sup> and another, this time in Latin, in 1268.<sup>117</sup> But the most important of Abaqa's diplomatic letters is that sent to Pope Gregory X at the time of the Council of Lyons of 1274.<sup>118</sup> The Mongol mission was composed of sixteen persons, including Mongols, Eastern Christians, the Dominican David of Ashbly, and a Frank, Richard the notary and interpreter. During their stay in France, several of the Mongol members of this embassy appear to have been baptized, and this contributed to the idea, appearing in several Western sources, that Abaqa himself was Christian: he had been miraculously converted by the "daughter of Prester John."<sup>119</sup>

The content of the Ilkhan's letter is broadly identical to that of Hülegü's, but the Biblical quotations have disappeared, and there is no mention of the embassy sent to Qaraqorum by the King of France in 1268. The preamble, faithful to the practices of the Mongol chancelleries, states that the Great Khans, by the strength of the living God and his power, have subdued all the lands of the East as far as the Gyon (Oxus).<sup>120</sup> But the tone of this letter is much more nuanced. The mandate of Heaven granted to Genghis Khan and his descendants, so strongly emphasized by Hülegü, is not mentioned here, and there is no longer any demand for submission, even implicitly. Abaqa clearly seeks an

115 Paul Meyvaert, "An Unknown Letter of Hulagu," 258.

116 Lupprian, n° 42, 221–222.

117 Lupprian, n° 43, 224–225. On the discovery of this letter, and its first publication, see Eugène Tisserant, "Une lettre de l'Ilkhan de Perse Abaga adressée au Pape Clément IV," *Le Muséon* 59 (1946): 547–556. Thomas Tanase has identified another letter of Abaqa's in a fourteenth-century Gospel, see "Une lettre en latin inédite de l'Ilkhan Abaqa au pape Nicolas III. Croisade ou mission?" in *Les relations diplomatiques entre le monde musulman et l'Occident latin*, 333–347.

118 Lupprian, n° 44, 228–230. On this mission to the Council of Lyons, see Burkhard Roberg, "Die Tataren auf dem 2. Konzil von Lyon 1274," *Annuaire Historiae Conciliorum* 5 (1973): 241–302; Jean Richard, "Chrétiens et Mongols au Concile."

119 See Sylvia Schein, "Gesta Dei per Mogolos 1300. The Genesis of a Non-Event," *The English Historical Review* 94/272 (1979): 809.

120 Lupprian, n° 44, 228.

alliance with the Westerners. As in his letter of 1268, he renews his proposal to establish a treaty of perpetual peace with the holy Roman church (*confederationem habere volens et pacem firman cum omnibus Christianis sacrosante ecclesie Romane subiectis*).<sup>121</sup>

In Abaqa's letter, Hülegü's<sup>122</sup> advance into Muslim territory is minutely detailed. The Ilkhan crosses the Oxus and by main force captures all the kingdoms of the Persians from the Saracens. He makes himself master of Baghdad, then kills the caliph along with a multitude of Muslims. Thus far, the account conforms to the historical facts as given in the Islamic sources. The author of the letter then writes that Hülegü's progress continued. He crosses the Kingdom of Jerusalem as far as the "stone of the desert" (*petram deserta*) located on the threshold of the desert that the sons of Israel had crossed.<sup>123</sup> Here, the "stone of the desert" refers to the city of Petra, located on the ancient road to Egypt. The allusion to the chosen people is obvious. Hülegü is discreetly painted as a "new Moses." He is thus the bearer of a mission of salvation: to destroy the "cursed race of the Saracens." It is in fact well known that when Hülegü conquered Syria, he barely went any further than Aleppo. Then, after taking the city, he returned to Azerbaijan, leaving it to his great military commander, Kitbugha, to conquer Damascus.

The inclusion of these details about Jerusalem and Hülegü's advance towards Egypt was intended to persuade the West to help out assistance to the Ilkhans. Richard the notary, the translator of this letter of Abaqa's, thus uses religious arguments which could be directly understood by the addressee, adapting the content of his letter to the latter's cultural and religious references.

After a hiatus following the accession to the throne of Tegüder Aḥmad who, having converted to Islam, sought to establish peaceful relations with the Mamluk sultan, diplomatic relations between the Ilkhans and the West resumed with a new intensity during Arghun's reign. He followed the same policies of his father trying to gather allies for a campaign against the Mamluks. Arghun's ambitions may have been spurred, according to Waṣṣāf, by the idea

121 Lupprian, n° 44, 230.

122 It should be remarked that Hülegü is never again referred to by name after his death is mentioned; thus: "He succeeded to the kingdom [...] Abaqacham who followed in the footsteps of his father [...], now called Seynegen by the Mongols (*nominati nunc apud Mogalos Seynegen*)." In Abaqa's letter, *seynegen*, which refers to the late Ilkhan, is a corruption of *sayin* khan. The Mongol custom was that the dead were not referred to by name, but rather as the "good father" (*sayin achige*) or the "good khan" (*sayin khan*), as in the letters for which we have originals in Mongolian, see *infra*.

123 Lupprian, n° 44, 229.

suggested by Sa'd al-Dawla, that he was a "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction" (*ṣāhib-qirān*), a ruler destined to achieve greatness, who was chosen by God, or by Eternal Heaven.<sup>124</sup> It must be noted that these attempts at forming an alliance had as yet never come to fruition. The crucial problem the Westerners had with such a Mongol alliance was that the Mongols were not Christians. They could not trust a heathen ally: they needed a Christian partner.

In the very first year of his reign, Arghun resumed the effort to form an alliance with the West, with a letter dated 18 May 1285 sent from Tabriz to Pope Honorius IV, of which we possess only a Latin translation.<sup>125</sup> The language of this letter is very obscure and difficult to understand. It seems to be a Latin "calque" of a Mongolian original. The Ilkhan recalls how Genghis Khan was well-disposed towards the Christians: he had ordered that they need not pay tribute and should be free on their lands.<sup>126</sup> This order of the Great Khan is often invoked in the sources. In reality, this immunity was granted to the heads of all religions on condition that they accepted Mongol authority.<sup>127</sup> Arghun also says that: "Our first mother was Christian" (*noster prima mater erat Cristina*).<sup>128</sup> The ancestress of Abaqa and Tegüder Aḥmad, Sorqaqtani (d. 1252), was a Nestorian of the Kerait tribe, and the wife of their grandfather Tolui. After the latter's death, she pursued her career in China.<sup>129</sup> But in Arghun's letter, the "*prima mater*" of the Mongols is probably Doquz Khatun, Hülegü's chief wife. She was revered by the Christians of the Near East and famed among the Franks. Arghun emphasizes the protection that the Christian communities enjoyed in order to convince the Supreme Pontiff and the princes of the West to help him with river forces against the sultan of Egypt.

Arghun sent another embassy to the West, which arrived in summer 1287, during the vacancy in the Holy See that followed the death of Honorius IV. This embassy was headed by Rabban Ṣawma, described as the bishop of the

124 Aubin, *Émirs mongols*, 43; Anne Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 44.

125 Lupprian, n° 49, 245–246. Arghun's letter seems to have been seen as important by the Holy See, as it was included in the Vatican Registers, see *ibid.*, 244. The embassy included the Nestorian ʿĪsā kelemechi (*Ise terchūman*), Qubilai's interpreter, whom the latter had sent to Arghun with presents for the Pope. Four other persons joined the expedition: two Mongols, Bogagoc and Mengilic (Mongolian, Menggelig), and two Italians, Ugeto the interpreter and Thomas Banchrinus. The latter was in fact Thomas Anfossi, a member of the Genovese banking family; hence the name "Banchrinus" by which he is referred to in the letter, see Luciano Petech, "Les marchands italiens," 561.

126 Lupprian, n° 49, 246.

127 On this question, see Yao Tao-chung, "Ch'iu Ch'u-chi and Chinggis Khan," 201–219.

128 Lupprian, n° 49, 246.

129 On Sorqaqtani, see Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 101, 175–176, 273.

eastern regions of the empire (*Bersauma episcopus in partibus orientis*), and also included Sabadinus, a Mongol nobleman, Thomas Anfossi, and Ugetus the interpreter. While awaiting the election of the new Supreme Pontiff, which took place in 1288, Rabban Şawma paid a visit to Philip the Fair, and then to the king of England, Edward I, who was in Gascony at the time. The latter received him warmly and his joy increased when the interview turned to the question of Jerusalem: "We, the king of this land, bear the cross as a symbol on our person [. . .]. The plans that I have in my heart [. . .] are similar to those of King Arghun."<sup>130</sup> After the return of the embassy from Rome, with gifts from the Pope, Arghun convinced himself that the hope for military alliance with West was about to be realised. He seizes the occasion to manifest his good dispositions towards the Christians.<sup>131</sup> In all the Mongol *urdu* a church was constantly being set up. Nevertheless, Arghun's decision to built one at his own court, was "relevant since it admitted the Christian cult into the sovereign's *urdu*."<sup>132</sup>

On 2 April 1288, soon after his election, the new Pope Nicholas IV addressed a letter to Arghun in response to his embassy.<sup>133</sup> But, unfortunately, none of the letters sent by the Supreme Pontiff had any bearing on the Ilkhan's hopes of establishing a military alliance. Carried away by his missionary fervour, Nicholas IV incessantly speaks of a different aim: that of persuading Arghun to receive baptism, in the hope that his conversion would be followed by that of his Mongol subjects. The Pope rejoices that the "Lord has granted his grace to the Mongol king, as is revealed by the content of his letters and the affirmation of his messengers."<sup>134</sup> He urges him, once again, to convert. As one observes on reading the various letters sent by Nicholas IV to the Ilkhan and his entourage, they are very repetitive. The only goal of this pope, whose principal aim was to spread the Christian faith in the Muslim East and among the Mongols, was to bring Arghun and his people to embrace Christianity.

130 *Un ambassadeur du roi Argun en Occident*, 102. The account of this embassy is related in a Syriac text know as the *History of Mar Yahballaha and Rabban Şawma*, by an anonymous author has been identified as the Catholicos Timothy II (1318–1332). It mentions the founding of a Christian church at the *urdu* by Arghun see Pier Giorgio Borbone, "The Church at the Court of Arghun in Syriac and Armenian Sources," *Bazmavep* 3–4 (2010): 551–579.

131 Pier Giorgio Borbone, "The Church at the Court of Arghun," 577.

132 The History states that the church-tent was located right next the Ilkhan's tent: "the ropes of the curtains of the church intermingled with those of his house." See, Pier Giorgio Borbone, "The Church at the Court of Arghun," 578.

133 Lupprian, n° 50, 247–249.

134 Lupprian, n° 50, 248.



Realizing that he would gain nothing from the Supreme Pontiff, Arghun gave up and turned to the king of France, Philip the Fair. He sent him a letter in Mongolian, which was delivered in 1289.<sup>135</sup> Probably in order to inspire confidence in his correspondent, the Ilkhan did not entrust this mission to Mongols assisted by Latin interpreters as had previously been the practice, but assigned the task to the Genovese Buscarello de Ghisolfi,<sup>136</sup> whose Italian name had in Mongolian become *Muskeril*,<sup>137</sup> followed by the name of his position as “quiver-bearer” (*qorchi*).<sup>138</sup> This latter was no mere honorific title that Arghun had conferred on Buscarello de Ghisolfi, but a sign of the greatest trust: he was indeed part of the Khan’s personal guard (*keshig*) and thus held a military position.<sup>139</sup>

The text of this letter, which is faithful to the model of the Mongol chancelleries, is a response to the King of France’s promise to send an army to assist the Ilkhan’s forces should they undertake a war against the Mamluks. The promise had been conveyed by the patriarch Mar Yabballaha III and the Nestorian prelate Bar Şawma in 1288, on their return from their mission in Europe. In his reply, Arghun suggests to Philip the Fair that they lead a joint campaign. He invokes the mandate of Heaven and sets a meeting for their forces in January 1291:

Now, if, in fulfilment of your sincere word, you send your troops on the agreed date, and if, granted good fortune by Heaven, we make ourselves masters of these peoples, we will give you Jerusalem.

135 The original of this letter is preserved in the French National Archives. It was first published by Jean-Pierre Abel de Rémusat, 170–172, and more recently by Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, *Les lettres de 1289 et 1305*, 17–53. On this letter, see also Antoine Mostaert, “Une phrase de la lettre de l’Ilkhan Arġun à Philippe le Bel,” *HJAS* 18 (1955): 200–220.

136 Buscarello de Ghisolfi is first mentioned in the sources in 1279, as having participated in fitting out a galley in 1274. His name appears in a charter drawn up by a notary of the Layas lodge in Cilicia. It also appears in two Genovese documents of 1280 and 1281, see Luciano Petech, “Les marchands italiens,” 562.

137 Nicholas IV, in a bulla dated 30 September 1289, addressed to the king of England Edward I, calls him Buscarel, see Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305*, 48.

138 This term may be compared to *ildüchi*, “sword-bearer.”

139 On the *keshig*, see Charles Melville, “The *Keshig* in Iran: The Survival of the Royal Mongol Household,” in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 135–164.

But Arghun ends once more with an implicit order to submit:

If, by your embassies, you send a gift of wonderful items [...], may the force of Heaven and the good fortune of the Khan decide the manner in which we will show you favour!<sup>140</sup>

The letter is dated the year of the cow (1289), the sixth of *qaychid*<sup>141</sup> of the first month of the summer, when the Ilkhan was at Köndelen.<sup>142</sup>

Buscarello de Ghisolfi was charged with delivering the letter in Mongolian and, no doubt, giving an oral translation. He was also provided with a diplomatic note which was probably drawn up mainly at Arghun's dictation.<sup>143</sup> This concerned reinforcements for two Georgian Christian kings, subjects of the Mongols, who were supposed to provide twenty thousand men. Arghun asks Philip the Fair to make him a gift of, or sell at a reasonable price, twenty to thirty thousand horses. He finally asks the king of France to send him by river through Anatolia, which was a vassal of the Mongols of Iran, small livestock, cattle, and all the necessary fodder. This may seem like a considerable request, but in fact it was nothing of the sort. Every Mongol horseman travelled with his family and needed five fast horses for combat. John Masson Smith calculates that each family needed a hundred sheep in order to survive, as well as five horses for transport, including mares for breeding.<sup>144</sup> In order that these reinforcements might arrive quickly and easily, the Ilkhan proposed to Philip the Fair a derogation from the rule applied by the Mongols that everything had to be purified by passing between two fires. This ritual is attested by John of Plano Carpini and other missionaries: everything that was to enter the court of the Great Khan (men, beasts or presents) was thus purified in case "they

140 Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305*, 17–18; trans., 18. Mongolian letters of this period present a number of orthographic peculiarities. One or more vowels may not be written, a practice inherited from the Uyghur writing system. Some words also present anomalies in the writing of vowels, for example *mongke* for *möngke*. On these reading problems, see *ibid.*, 12.

141 The meaning "waning moon" has been discussed in relation to this term, see Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305*, 49–54.

142 On the location of Köndelen, see Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305*, 54.

143 *Un ambassadeur du Khan Argun en Occident*, 309–311.

144 See John Masson Smith, "Mongol Society and Military in the Middle East: Antecedents and Adaptation", in *War and Society in the Eastern Mediterranean, 7th–15th Centuries*, ed. Y. Lev (Leiden & New York & Köln: Brill, 1997), 247–264.

had made a charm to bring poison or some evil spell.<sup>145</sup> But this new diplomatic rapprochement, too, evidently remained unheeded: the proposed expedition to Syria-Palestine never took place. Neither the king of France nor Pope Nicholas IV considered it useful to ally with the Mongol khan in an attempt to regain the Holy Land from the Muslims.

Unaware that Arghun had died on 9 March 1291, Nicholas IV addressed another letter to the Ilkhan on 21 August 1291 in which he repeated his desire to see the latter convert to Christianity.<sup>146</sup> It seemed as if a watershed was being reached: some days later, on 23 August 1291, Nicholas IV sent yet another letter to the late Ilkhan. This time the tone changed: the pope asks all the Catholic kings and princes to join forces to recapture the Holy Land, but he still exhorts Arghun to convert, considering that this would facilitate his task of taking Jerusalem from the Saracens since he would benefit from God's assistance:

We pray your lordship, [...], we ask you with urgency and confidence to quickly receive holy baptism with a firm and respectful spirit (*promptis et reventibus animis sacrum baptismum recipiens*) [...], so that you may act with God's approval for the rapid reconquest of that land (*ad recuperationem celerem dicte terre*) and apply the strength of your power to breaking the pride and malice of his enemies, as your great royal prudence shows.<sup>147</sup>

In this letter, at last, an implicit military alliance is proposed to Arghun.

The difference in language can be explained here by the fact that the city of Acre had fallen to the Muslims on 18 May 1291, finally marking the end of the Latin kingdom of the Holy Land. This event, a tragedy for the Franks, was deeply felt across Western Christendom.<sup>148</sup> The late Arghun, of course, could not reply to this offer of military collaboration. His immediate successors, Geikhetü and Baidu, received an envoy from the king of England, but did not act on foot of this embassy.<sup>149</sup> The next developments in the Ilkhans' contacts with the West took place after the former became Muslims.

145 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 41–42. This ritual did not just apply to ambassadors and other foreigners, but also to the Mongols themselves, for example to the family of a dead person, to those who had been present at the death of a family member, to persons struck by lightning, and so forth.

146 Lupprian, n° 60, 270–271.

147 Lupprian, n° 62, 275–276.

148 On the fall of Acre, see the letters written in the East by Ricoldo de Monte Croce, see *Pérégrination en Terre sainte et au Proche-Orient*, 210–252.

149 Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 170.

Ghazan Khan, although he had officially converted to Islam just before ascending to the throne, launched the greatest number of military campaigns against Bilād al-Shām. We have shown elsewhere that while he no doubt hoped to conquer new territories, his desire was above all to impose himself as leader of the *umma*.<sup>150</sup> But his conversion did not change his attitude towards Christian rulers, as he undertook his first campaign in Syria (1299–1300) with the king of Cilicia, Het'um II (r. 1289–1307) and Georgian reinforcements. On 23 December 1299, he defeated the Mamluk troops at Ḥims, entering Damascus with his allies on 6 January 1300. Ghazan Khan does not appear to have contacted the Frankish princes of the Near East before embarking on his campaign, but rather at a point when he was probably between Aleppo and Damascus. On 21 October, he sent Isol the Pisan on an embassy to Henri II of Lusignan, the king of Cyprus, in order to obtain military reinforcements from him and the masters of the Hospitaller and Templar orders.<sup>151</sup> But the latter could not agree which side to take.<sup>152</sup> Ghazan Khan's victory and the temporary occupation of Syria, including the Holy Land, by the Mongols and the king of Cilicia caused something of a stir in the West. A few authors maintain that he entered Damascus on 6 January 1300—Epiphany Day, while others contend that the Ilkhan was at the entombment of Christ in Jerusalem with Het'um II on that date. Following Ghazan Khan's victory, the Pope ordered the celebration of the recapture of Jerusalem by organizing processions. Although most Western sources remain silent on the Ilkhan's religion, some claim that he had converted to Christianity.<sup>153</sup> These reports came during a year (1300) of millennial expectations and following close on the heels of the disaster of Acre.<sup>154</sup> According to Adam Knobler, the stories of the conversion of Eastern princes are not found in official court documents. Ghazan Khan's conversion was solely due to taking a diplomatic initiative.<sup>155</sup>

While Ghazan Khan was preparing for his second campaign (winter 1300–1), he once again invited the Frankish princes to join his troops in Armenia. This time, the response from Cyprus was positive: Henri II of Lusignan's brother,

150 See chapter 12.

151 Jean Richard, "Isol le Pisan," 189–190.

152 Jean Richard, "La coopération militaire entre Francs et Mongols à l'épreuve," 121; Peter Jackson, *The Mongols and the West*, 170–171.

153 Sylvia Schein, "Dei per Mongolos 1300," 805–808.

154 Adam Knobler, "Pseudo-Conversions and Patchwork Pedigrees: The Christianization of Muslim Princes and the Diplomacy of Holy War," *Journal of World History* 7/2 (1996): 188.

155 Adam Knobler, "Pseudo-Conversions," 197.

Amalric, led troops to Tortosa.<sup>156</sup> Guy of Ibelin and John of Antioch and their forces joined up with King Het'um II in Cilicia, but Ghazan Khan had been obliged to turn back before reaching Aleppo due to extremely bad weather. Once again, the alliance between Franks and Mongols failed to become a military reality.<sup>157</sup>

Later, on 12 April 1302, in anticipation of his third Syrian campaign of spring 1303, Ghazan Khan sent Pope Boniface VIII (r. 1294–1303) an embassy of three persons.<sup>158</sup> His letter began with the traditional preamble, but shorn of any initial reference to Heaven: “We, Ghazan, our word (*Gazan üge manu*) to the Pope (*Bab-a*).”<sup>159</sup> The scholars who edited this document, Antoine Mostaert and Francis Cleaves, conclude that this resulted from the involvement of Muslims, whom they consider to have been the authors of this diplomatic communication. They mention, in their commentary on the preamble to Ghazan Khan’s letter, a three-line document,<sup>160</sup> undated and unattributed, held in the museum of Tehran.<sup>161</sup> This text includes the formula: “In the Might of Everlasting Heaven. In the Support of the Prophet Muqamad. In the Protection of Great Fortune Flame.”<sup>162</sup>

According to Paul Pelliot this exordium of three lines may be the missing material from an edict of Abū Sa’īd,<sup>163</sup> issued in 1320, containing many Arabic technical terms.<sup>164</sup> The document in question begins as follows: “Abū Sa’īd Bahadur Khan, our word (*Busayid bayatur qan üge manu*).”<sup>165</sup> This hypothesis is entirely plausible, but cannot readily be proven. If it is correct, then the reference to Eternal Heaven might indeed refer to the God of Islam. But if this is the case, why should the reference to Heaven have been removed from the preamble from Ghazan Khan’s diplomatic communication? The preambles of letters sent by Mongol chancelleries are highly codified, and appear almost word

156 This alliance between the king of Cyprus and Ghazan Khan was condemned by Ibn Taymiyya in his *Risālat al-Qubruşşyyah*, see *Lettre à un roi croisé*.

157 Jean Richard, “La coopération militaire,” 123.

158 The three persons in question had Muslim names: Saladin (Sa’d al-Dīn), Sinanadin (Sinān al-Dīn) et Samasadin (Shams al-Dīn); see remarks on these names by Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, “Trois documents mongols,” 476–477.

159 Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, “Trois documents Mongols,” 470.

160 Antoine Mostaert and Francis W. Cleaves, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305*, 57.

161 Francis W. Cleaves, “The Mongolian Documents in the Musée de Téhéran,” *HJAS* 16/1–2 (1953): 7, 26.

162 Francis W. Cleaves, “The Mongolian Documents in the Musée de Téhéran,” 26.

163 Francis W. Cleaves, “The Mongolian Documents in the Musée de Téhéran,” 7.

164 Francis W. Cleaves, “The Mongolian Documents in the Musée de Téhéran,” 9.

165 Francis W. Cleaves, “The Mongolian Documents in the Musée de Téhéran,” 27.

for word in Latin with the term “*Dei*” standing for Heaven. Ghazan Khan, furthermore, struck coins in the name of the *tenggeri*.<sup>166</sup> We know that, although Muslim, the Ilkhan remained very attached to his native Mongol culture, as the Islamic narrative sources attest in their descriptions of his behaviour. It is worth noting at this point that Pope Nicholas IV offered advice to Arghun’s son, after his baptism, with the aim of preventing his Christian faith alienating him from the rest of the Mongols and from their native culture. In a letter dated 21 August 1291, he says to the future Öljeitü:

We recommend to you [...] and we advise you [...] that neither in your character nor in your manner of dress nor in your conduct should there be anything [...] that could arouse scandal against you among your people. Do not make any change [...], always keep the same customs that you observed before your baptism.<sup>167</sup>

Ghazan Khan’s letter followed negotiations on military cooperation with the West against the Mamluks of Egypt. Its first sentence is quite explicit. It recalls that a certain Bisqarun<sup>168</sup> had brought the Ilkhan a message from the pope: “Your suggestions, your good words and the letter which you had previously sent have reached us.”<sup>169</sup> The text of the letter, dated 12 April 1302, recalls that Ghazan Khan had replied to the Holy Father, sending an embassy of two Mongols, Kökedei<sup>170</sup> and a certain Tümen, as well as the Ilkhans’ accredited emissary, Buscarello de Ghisolfi. They had been the bearers of an order.<sup>171</sup> One notes that by using this term the Ilkhan keeps his interlocutor in a position of inferiority, in the best Mongol tradition. In any case, the order proposed a

166 Thomas T. Allsen, *Culture and Conquest*, 32.

167 Lupprian, n° 64, 273. The future Öljeitü’s godfather was none other than Isol the Pisan, see Jean Richard, “Isol le Pisan,” 187.

168 This was Buscarello de Ghisolfi, whose name appears thus in Mongolian. He acted as messenger between the Ilkhans and the courts of Europe on several occasions, as in the case of Arghun’s letter to Philip the Fair.

169 Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, “Trois documents Mongols,” 471. This would appear to refer to the letter sent by Pope Boniface VIII on 26 February 1301, in which he congratulates Ghazan Khan on his military successes in Syria. On the chronology of these exchanges between the Ilkhan and the Papacy, see Jean Richard, “La coopération militaire entre Francs et Mongols,” 124–125.

170 The name Kökedei, derived from the root *köke*- “blue, dark blue, green,” means “darkish complexion,” see Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, “Trois documents Mongols,” 473–474.

171 Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, “Trois documents Mongols,” 471.

detailed joint military plan of campaign between the Persian Ilkhanate and the Christian princes whom Ghazan Khan was urging to intervene in the Holy Land. Without waiting for the pope's reply, in his 12 April letter, he once again ordered the preparations for the campaign which he had communicated to the Holy Father via his Mongol ambassadors: "You too, prepare yourself; send notice to the sultans of the diverse nations and do not miss the agreed date." To justify his conquest, Ghazan Khan continues to place himself under the protection of Heaven so that this "great work," in other words victory over the Mamluks of Egypt, could be successful.<sup>172</sup>

Although a Muslim, Ghazan Khan had not forsaken the Mongol political ideology, and continued to claim the mandate of Heaven. He was allied to the Armenian king of Cilicia, and other Eastern Christians also reinforced his armies. Ghazan Khan, furthermore, maintained good relations with his Christian subjects. He extended his protection to the Nestorian patriarch Mar Yahballaha III as well as the Christians of Marāgha, after the persecutions to which the emir Nawrūz had subjected them.<sup>173</sup> This religious openness should have encouraged the pope to change his political approach and accept the proposed alliance. We do not know whether the Supreme Pontiff replied to this offer. It seems that Boniface VIII, no doubt hesitant to ally himself with a Muslim monarch, did nothing to encourage the Westerners and the Franks of the Near East to furnish military assistance to the Ilkhan.

The campaign in question is the one which took place in early 1303 and in which, for health purposes, the Ilkhan was not able to take part personally. His great emir, Quṭlugh-Shāh, was headed of the Mongolian army, which was inadequate against the Mamluk troops. The campaign ended in outright disaster on the plain of Marj al-Ṣuffar near Damascus, on 13 April 1303. The Mongol forces suffered heavy losses.

Nevertheless, Ghazan Khan had not yet given up his ambitions in Syria. He sent a new embassy to the West that same year, led by his emissary Buscarello de Ghisolfi, who had been entrusted with messages for the kings of the West. We do not have any details of how he was received. We know that the king of England, Edward I, gave him a letter on 12 March in which he regretted his unavailability.<sup>174</sup> It is interesting to note that this letter was not addressed directly to Ghazan Khan, but to the patriarch Mar Yahballaha III, with whom

172 Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, "Trois documents Mongols," 470.

173 Ghazan Khan proclaimed a number of decrees in favour of the Christians, see *Un ambassadeur du roi Argun en Occident*, 122–125.

174 Luciano Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'empire mongol," 564; J. Richard, "La coopération militaire entre Francs et Mongols," 125.

the Ilkhan had a personal relationship; the two men were united by mutual friendship and esteem.<sup>175</sup> For the same year, 1303, the *Chronique de Saint-Denis* mentions the arrival of Ghazan Khan's emissaries:

There came to Paris, to the king of France, the messengers of the Tartars, saying that the king of France and the barons of the Christian people should send their men to the aid of the Holy Land; and their lord, the lord of Tartary, would fight the Saracens, and both he and his people would fain become Christians.<sup>176</sup>

This promise that the Ilkhan and his subjects would convert to Christianity is probably of Eastern Christian origin, and can be linked to the accounts analysed by Sylvia Schein regarding Ghazan Khan's Christianity, following his victory in his first campaign in Syria and the very temporary "recapture" of the Holy Land by the Mongols.

The last Ilkhanid diplomatic communication to the Latin West was sent some years later, in 1305, by Öljeitü, who had also converted to Islam. He announced to the Christian princes his ascension to the throne, which had been confirmed by the Great Khan, and, above all, his envoys were charged with proposing a new joint military plan of campaign against the Mamluks, which would involve the restoration of Jerusalem to Christendom. This letter, dated 13 May 1305, is preserved in the form of a Mongolian original, which has on its reverse a contemporary translation into the Italian of Pisa.<sup>177</sup>

As in Ghazan Khan's letter, the mandate of Heaven is not invoked in the preamble, but it is mentioned on several occasions in the body of the letter.

175 The Ilkhan's good relations with the patriarch are attested in the history of Mar Yahballaha written by his travelling companion, Rabban Šawma, see *Un ambassadeur du Khan Argun en Occident*, 122–25, 133–140.

176 French text in J.-B. Chabot, "Notes sur les relations du roi Arghoun avec l'Occident. Appendice I à l'Histoire de Mar Jabalaha III," *Revue de l'Orient latin* 11 (1984): 638.

177 This has been published, with a rich philological commentary, by Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305*, Mongolian text, 55–56; French translation, 56–57, commentary, 57–85. The Mongolian letter refers to two ambassadors by name: a Mongol, Mamalagh, and a certain Tumen. The Italian translation enables us to better identify these two persons. Mamalagh becomes Mamalac, which confirms that he was indeed a Mongol, but the second emissary is named "Tomassa, Ilduci del Sultano." This Tomasso, like Buscarello de Ghisolfi, occupied a military position and was a member of Öljeitü's personal guard. Petech proposed his identification with Tomasso Ugi of Siena, who appears as a witness in a document dated 13 September 1305, see Luciano Petech, "Les marchands italiens dans l'empire mongol," 165.



Having recalled that concord now prevailed between the various Mongol Khanates, Öljeitü writes:

Now that, by the force of Heaven, we are seated on the great throne, without contravening the orders and ordinances of our good ancestors, our good father, and our good elder brother [...], we propose to you that we remain tied to you by bonds of friendship even more than before [...] and to send each other ambassadors.<sup>178</sup>

He continues:

At present, having been granted inspiration by Heaven, we, Temür Qayan,<sup>179</sup> Toqtoga Qayan,<sup>180</sup> Chabar,<sup>181</sup> Duḡa<sup>182</sup> and other descendants of Genghis Khan [...], now protected by Heaven, we, elder brothers and younger brothers, have reached a mutual accord, and from the land where the sun rises to the sea of Talu, our states being joined together, we have connected together our postal stations.

Nevertheless, Öljeitü ends his letter with an implicit order of submission: “Now, as for those who will not agree, either with us, or with you, on what Heaven decides, with the force of Heaven we will, banding together, arise against them.”<sup>183</sup> The beginning of this sentence, which refers to those who would not agree with the Mongols, could readily be interpreted as a threat to Philip the Fair should he reject the offered alliance. This is also the reason why, as we shall see, the author of the Italian translation of this letter considerably softened the tone of this offer of an alliance.<sup>184</sup>

178 Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305*, Mongolian text, 55; French translation, 58.

179 Temür Öljeitü (r. 1294–1307) was Qubilai’s grandson and successor.

180 Toqtoga [Toqta] Khan (r. 1290–1312), Khan of the Golden Horde, was the son of Möngke Temür (r. 1267–1281), and succeeded Töle-Buqa (r. 1287–1290).

181 Chabar was the son of the prince Qaidu, see Michal Biran, *Qaidu and the Rise of the Independent Mongol State in Central Asia* (Richmond: Curzon, 1997), 60.

182 Dughā [Du’a] reigned in Inner Asia from 1282 to 1307, see Michal Biran, *Qaidu*, 122.

183 Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, *Les Lettres de 1289 et 1305*, Mongolian text, 55; French translation, 58.

184 This Italian translation was published with an account of previous research and a commentary on the Pisan language, see Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, “Traduzione in volgare Pisano di una lettera del-l’Ilkhan di Persia al rege di Francia Filippo il Bello (1305),” *Bollettino Storico Pisano* LXXIII (2004): 31–47. The edited text appears on page 37.

The language of the fourteenth-century Pisan translation is hard to understand. The Italian is a version of the Mongolian original, to which it remains relatively close, but one can no longer discern the implicit threat to the king of France. As in the Latin translations, the term Heaven has been replaced by "God" (*Dio*). The beginning of the Italian translation is a paraphrase of the Mongolian letter. But there is no longer any question, even implicitly, of submission:

Now, between us and you, he who will not execute our orders, with the force of God, then let us together form one single thing [. . .], then what pleases God will come to pass (*Oramai intra voie et noi, chi non farà li nostri chomandamenti, con la forza di Dio sî seremo insieme una cosa [. . .] e poi serà quello che a Dio piacerà*).<sup>185</sup>

But what seems to me most significant here is the alteration the translator has made to the extent of Mongol power. As Denis Sinor has shown, *Talu* is a mutilated form of the Old Turkic *taluy* "sea, ocean."<sup>186</sup> In the Mongolian letter, *Talu dalai* refers to the bounds of the world, whose ultimate border is the ocean that encircles it: the western borders therefore remain vague.<sup>187</sup> For diplomatic reasons, the translator of the letter does indeed mention the eastern borders where the sun rises, but to gain an alliance with the king of France, he lets it be clearly understood that Mongol authority does not extend to the bounds of the Earth but stops where that of the Western rulers begins (*da undo lo sole si leva infine ale vostre confine*).<sup>188</sup>

The diplomatic language of the Ilkhans, as can be seen, is much less aggressive than that of the Great Khans. Nevertheless, with the exception of Abaqa's communications, the requirement of submission in accordance with the mandate of Heaven is always implicit. The Mongol rulers are "predestined by Heaven above" to make their conquests, even if they have converted to Islam. They in fact remained very much attached to their original cultural

185 Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, "Traduzione in volgare Pisano," 3.

186 Denis Sinor, "The Mysterious 'Talu Sea' in Öljeitu's Letter to Philip the Fair of France," *Analecta Mongolica dedicated to Owen Lattimore. Mongolia Society Occasional Papers* 8 (1972): 117.

187 Denis Sinor, "The Mysterious Talu Sea," 119.

188 Valeria Bertolucci Pizzorusso, "Traduzione in volgare Pisano," 37. The Italian translation was made on the plain of Mūghān (Italian, Mugiano), north of Lake Urmiyya. The translator spontaneously omitted the Hijra date, 704/1305, and that of the Mongol calendar, the 8 of qayūchid of the first month of the summer of the Year of the Snake. The translation is dated to the Year of the Incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ, 25 April 1306.

substratum, especially in Ghazan Khan's case. As for Öljeitü, his religious itinerary is quite involved: initially a shamanist, he was baptized and adopted the Christian faith, then became Buddhist, and finally converted first to Sunni and then to Twelver Shi'ite Islam, returning to Sunnism at the end of his life. In these circumstances, the sincerity of the conversion to Islam of the Mongols of Iran has been questioned. The Mamluks rightly saw it as a mere matter of political calculation and military ambitions on their territory.

### Conclusion: The Reasons for a Failure

In the first part of this study, we demonstrated the complexity of these diplomatic exchanges and correspondences, given the prevalence of multilingualism in the Mongol Empire. We dealt with the problem of documents which have come down to us in various languages, most often in the form of translations, the surviving originals being few in number. Despite this linguistic complexity, by virtue of placing these letters in their historic and cultural context we have been able to confirm that the Latin translations, at least for the documents issued by the Great Khans, are reliable. The question becomes more complex under the Ilkhans, due to the high probability of intervention by the Eastern Christians and Franks who were in their service.

We have observed that the Great Khans' concept of peace required unconditional submission, and that it was not possible to negotiate this subordination to Mongol authority; this is broadly confirmed by the historical chronicles, both Muslim and Christian. This ideology of conquest is based on a concept to be found in the *Secret History*: the Mongol rulers are the "sons of Heaven." In the diplomatic correspondence that has come down to us, and in all other sources (travellers' accounts and chronicles), the discourse is immutable. Either those who exercised authority in other nations agreed to be "in harmony" with the Mongols, or they were in a "state of rebellion" against the order of Eternal Heaven. In the latter case, they must disappear from the face of the Earth or be reduced to slavery.

A change seems to have taken place under the Ilkhans of Iran, who sought an alliance with the West against the sultans of Cairo. The many embassies and diplomatic communications exchanged between the Ilkhans, the kings of France and the Papacy attest to this. But why did this pursuit of an alliance with the West never come to fruition? Probably because, despite the apparently conciliatory tone of the Mongol rulers of Iran, the proposal of a military alliance was almost always accompanied by an implicit demand for submis-

sion. We have been able to observe that this logic remains implicit in the peace proposals made by those Ilkhans who had converted to Islam. In addition, the Church of Rome was inclined to distrust the Mongols, for several reasons. For one thing, the Popes took a negative view of the Nestorians' political influence. In the eyes of the Papacy, they were simply heretical Christians. Furthermore, the majority of the Ilkhans' subjects were Muslims, and many Mongols had converted to Islam, well before Ghazan Khan's official conversion in 1295. Latin Christendom, whether represented by the popes or the kings of France, had no confidence in potential allies who were surrounded by Muslim subjects. To all these factors must be added the consideration that the Papacy was at this time engaged in great missionary efforts in the East and Far East. In this perspective, as is attested by the majority of the papal letters, any military cooperation depended on the prior conversion of the Ilkhans and their subjects to Christianity. The great majority of the Mongols of Iran were very favourable to the Christians, even the Muslim Ghazan Khan, who, as we have emphasized, placed the patriarch Mar Yahballaha III and the Christians of Marāgha under his protection after the persecutions perpetrated against them by his emir Nawrūz. In utter breach of the Sharī'a, according to Rabban Ṣawma, he exempted them from paying the poll tax:

According to custom, he [Ghazan] proclaimed decrees for the catholicos: in the first place, that the poll tax was no longer to be levied on the Christians; that none of them [should be forced] to renounce his own faith [. . .].<sup>189</sup>

His predecessors Hülegü, Abaqa, and Arghun had, in the Mongol tradition, taken no interest in the religion practised by their subjects. Like Genghis Khan, the founder of the empire, the Ilkhans considered that religious affiliation was a personal choice in which the political authorities had no say. Pope Nicholas IV engaged in a great missionary effort directed at Arghun and his family, as all his letters, with their incessantly repetitive content calling for conversion, testify. But the Ilkhan remained inflexible regarding his religious persuasion and that of his subjects. In a letter in Mongolian sent to Nicholas IV in 1290, he expresses himself in the following terms:

We other descendants of Genghis Khan, we say that, either our subjects enter of their own free will in the *silam* [convert to Christianity], or they

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189 *Un ambassadeur du Khan Argun en Occident*, 123.

do not [. . .]. Those who have entered the *silam* do not contravene the orders of the Eternal Heavens and the Misaqa.<sup>190</sup>

In his reply to the Pope, Arghun in turn repeated the religious policy of Genghis Khan, as perceived by John of Plano Carpini: “They believe in a creator God, but as their religion is not based on any law, the Mongols have not forced any person to renounce his own faith.”<sup>191</sup>

The politically influential Christians, who had placed such hopes in the possibility of an alliance between the Ilkhans and the West, never convinced the kings of France and the Supreme Pontiffs to provide the Mongols of Iran with military assistance to vanquish Islam. The rumours of the conversion of the Khans, the emphasis on the protection of the Christians, on the figure of Doquz Khatun—presented as the daughter of the powerful King John of India (*filia potentissimi regis Indie Iohannis*),<sup>192</sup> in other words of Prester John—as well as the promise to restore Jerusalem to the Papacy: all these good reasons invoked in support of a military alliance remained without effect. This “good news” which would appear to have been of Christian origin was not enough to persuade Christendom to ally with the Mongols in order to overcome their mutual enemy, even if some Latin princes of the East did from time to time respond favourably to the Ilkhans’ offers for alliances. We have observed that this pursuit of a military alliance was almost at the point of coming to fruition when the Mongols of Iran converted to Islam. But at that time, the rulers of the West were preoccupied by the situation in their own realms, and the affairs of the Holy Land were no longer their main concern. Nevertheless, it seems to me important to take into account a psychological factor. This diplomatic correspondence brought into contact two incompatible universalizing ideologies. The Mongols claimed power, at least implicitly when dealing with their potential allies, over all the peoples of the Earth, in the name of Eternal Heaven, while the Papacy of Rome, in its missionary efforts, sought to extend Latin Christianity to the borders of the Far East.

190 Francis W. Cleaves and Antoine Mostaert, “Trois documents Mongols,” Mongolian text, 450; French translation, 451. Here *Misaqa* corresponds to *Misica* in Hülegü’s Latin letter.

191 *Ystoria Mongalorum*, 39; *Storia dei Mongoli*, 238. But the idea that the Mongol rulers were indifferent to the religious practices of their (non-Mongols) subjects was not the product of a natural inclination towards syncretism. It sprang from the *Realpolitik*, as their habit of exploiting the religious susceptibilities of independent powers for diplomatic and strategic purposes, see Peter Jackson, “The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered,” 277.

192 Lupprian, n° 44, 229.

## Hülegü's Letters to the Last Ayyubid Ruler of Syria. The Construction of a Model

The formation of Hülegü's *ulus*, after the fall of Baghdad and the abolition by the Mongols of the Abbasid Caliphate in 658/1260, profoundly altered the geopolitics of the lands east of Egypt. For the first time this part of *dār al-islām* fell under the rule of a non-Muslim power. The semblance of unity that the Abbasid caliphs had, not without difficulty, maintained across the Iranian plateau, Mesopotamia, the Levant and the Arabian Peninsula was definitively broken. The establishment of the Persian Ilkhanate resulted in a clear dividing line between two rival powers: the Ilkhans, whose territories spanned much of the Iranian plateau and Mesopotamia, and the Mamluks, who ruled Syria-Palestine and Egypt as well as controlling the Islamic holy places of the Hijaz.<sup>1</sup> For over fifty years, these rival powers fought a merciless ideological war, not without resorting to the use of arms. The Ilkhans launched several major offensives into Syria (1260, 1281, 1299, 1300, 1303 and 1312–13). The first invasion, led by Hülegü, ravaged northern Syria. He briefly captured Damascus, but the Mongol advance was halted at 'Ayn Jālūt in 658/1260 by the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz and his emir Baybars. This long period of conflict was marked by the exchange of embassies and ample diplomatic correspondence between the two rival powers until the negotiations that led to the peace treaty of 1323.<sup>2</sup>

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\* This chapter is a revised version of a paper published under the title: "Les correspondances adressées par Hülegü au prince ayyoubide de Syrie, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf," in *Pensée grecque et sagesse d'Orient. Hommages à Michel Tardieu*, eds. M.-A. Moezzi, J.-D. Dubois, C. Jullien et F. Jullien (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010), 1–21.

1 Since the conquest of Yemen by Saladin's son Tūrān-Shāh in 569/1174 it had been the Ayyubid sultan's duty to protect the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. This task then fell to Mamluks, who presented themselves as the guarantors of Islam against the Mongol dynasty of Iran.

2 See Charles Melville, "Sometimes by the Sword, Sometimes by the Dagger: The Role of the Isma'īlis in Mamluk-Mongol Relations in the 8th/14th Century," in *Medieval Isma'ili History and Thought*, ed. Farhad Daftary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 247–263; Reuven Amitai, "The Resolution of the Mongol-Mamluk War," in *Mongols, Turks and Others: Eurasian Nomads and the Sedentary World*, eds. R. Amitai and M. Biran (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 359–390.

I will analyse below Hülegü's "letters" to al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf, the Ayyubid prince of Damascus and Aleppo. As with all the letters sent by the Ilkhans to Muslim rulers, we have no original documents, but only versions transmitted by historians, which often vary considerably amongst themselves. We have many "copies" of these letters, but it seems as though we are faced with various versions of an (or two) original letter. One immediate and rather difficult problem which faces us regards which of the various transmissions of these documents is closest to the original, and what chronology one might propose for their composition.

### The Letters in their Historical Context

On the eve of the Mongol invasion, Bilād al-Shām was divided between three Ayyubid princes. The most important, al-Malik al-Nāṣir, reigned over Damascus and Aleppo. Al-Manṣūr Muḥammad ruled Ḥamā subject to al-Malik al-Nāṣir's control. The third prince, al-Mughīth 'Umar, had established himself at Karak in Palestine in the same year that al-Malik al-Nāṣir had taken control of Damascus.<sup>3</sup> The Mongol armies first entered *dār al-islām* in 628/1231 in pursuit of Jalāl al-Dīn Kh<sup>w</sup>ārazm-Shāh, but they did not begin to attack Ayyubid territory until 642/1244, after the defeat of the Rūm Saljuqs at Köse Dagħ.<sup>4</sup> Most of the region's rulers displayed considerable political pragmatism in the face of the Mongol threat. Many of them hastened to submit to the Great Khan of Mongolia. This was the approach that al-Malik al-Nāṣir too adopted, even before the Mongols entered Iraq. From early 641/1243–1244, according to al-Juwaynī's account, the sultans of Anatolia and Bilād al-Shām<sup>5</sup> sent ambassadors to the Mongol representative in Azerbaijan requesting his protection.<sup>6</sup> Then, in 643/1245–6, al-Malik al-Nāṣir sent a trusted emissary to Güyük in Qaraqorum.<sup>7</sup> Finally, in 648/1250, the Ayyubid ruler sent a new mission to Mongolia to convey his submission to Güyük's successor Möngke. This mission was led by his minister Zayn al-Dīn al-Ḥāfiẓī, who returned to Damascus

3 See Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 19; Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols. Ayyubids of Damascus*, 1193–1269 (New York, 1977), 309–363.

4 Stephen Humphrey, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 334.

5 At this point, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf did not as yet control Damascus.

6 Juwaynī, *Ta'rikh-i jahāngushā* 11:244; Juwaynī/Boyle 11:508.

7 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 19.

bearing an imperial command (*yarlıgh*) and a tablet of authority (*pāyza*).<sup>8</sup> The Great Khan confirmed al-Malik al-Nāşir's submission and, therefore, his status as a vassal.<sup>9</sup>

### *A First 'Letter'?*

Many sources state that after the fall of the Abbasid capital, the princes of Bilād al-Shām sent several embassies to Hülegü. One early mission was sent in 656/1258. Barhebraeus writes that after the Mongol conquest of Iraq, Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu', the lord of Mawşil sent his son, al-Şāliḥ Rukn al-Dīn, accompanied by a thousand horsemen, supposedly to the aid of the "King of Kings." Hülegü, however, was not impressed: "You have waited to see who would emerge victorious before joining us. And had the caliph won, you would have allied yourself with him, not with me."<sup>10</sup> Badr al-Dīn Lu'lu' alarmed by the implicit threat then went before the Mongol khan himself with presents to confirm his submission in person.<sup>11</sup> He was well received and was even so bold as to place an earring of precious stones on Hülegü's ear.<sup>12</sup>

Al-Malik al-Nāşir then decided to follow the lord of Mawşil's example and send his young son, al-Malik al-'Azīz, to the khan with presents and precious objects (*hadāya wa tuḥfa*). But Hülegü asked him why his father was tarrying in coming himself. Al-Malik al-'Azīz tried to make excuses, claiming that the sultan had to remain in Syria because of fears aroused by the enemies of Islam, the Franks (*khawf<sup>an</sup> 'alaynā min 'adū l-islām al-faranj*).<sup>13</sup> Hülegü seems to have accepted this argument. Baybars al-Manşūrī<sup>14</sup> and al-Yūnīnī give similar accounts of this mission. The latter adds that in that year, the Tatar envoys returned from their mission to al-Malik al-Nāşir Yūsuf with much money (*jumla kabīra min al-māl*).<sup>15</sup> According to Barhebraeus, Hülegü's ambassadors nevertheless stepped up their demands that al-Malik al-Nāşir come in person to swear allegiance to the khan.<sup>16</sup> None of these authors say that the Ayyubid

8 On the term *pāyza*, see Doerfer 1:239–241; see also Igor de Rachewiltz, "Two Recently Published P'ai-tzu Discovered in China," *AOASH XXXVI/1–3* (1982): 23–27.

9 Rashīd al-Dīn/Alizade 111:67. On this mission, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 21.

10 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 507.

11 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 507.

12 *Nihayāt* xxvii:259. See also Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 507–508; *Zubdat*, 42.

13 *Nihayāt* xxvii:260.

14 *Zubdat*, 43.

15 Quṭb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī 1:91.

16 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 508.



prince's son returned bearing a letter. However, Persian historian Rashīd al-Dīn writes that al-Malik al-'Azīz set out homeward on 19 Rabī' 1 656/26 March 1258 with a letter that Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī had drawn up on Hülegü's orders, of which he gives a version quite dissimilar to other transmissions. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī had been part of the Ilkhan's entourage since the fall of Baghdad. It is possible that this fragment of text is a transmission of a small part of a letter addressed by Hülegü to al-Malik al-Nāṣir on a different occasion.<sup>17</sup> In the same year, 656/1258, al-Maqrīzī writes that the Ayyubid prince sent his son, accompanied by some of his emirs, to Hülegü. He reports that when al-Malik al-'Azīz arrived, it was demanded of him "in his father's tongue" (*'alā lisān abī-hi*) that the latter should come with an army of twenty thousand horsemen to join the war against the Mamluks of Egypt, but the writer does not mention any letter.<sup>18</sup>

According to the accounts given by Barhebraeus, Rashīd al-Dīn and al-Maqrīzī, it seems that al-Malik al-Nāṣir made contact with Hülegü very early. If the date given by Rashīd al-Dīn is correct, the Ayyubid sultan's son headed back only a month after the caliph's death. This could explain why Hülegü asked the ruler of Damascus for reinforcements to further pursue his conquests.<sup>19</sup> It is also possible that the date given by Rashīd al-Dīn is incorrect; he is the only historian to mention this particular date. Barhebraeus says that al-Malik al-'Azīz stayed the whole winter with Hülegü,<sup>20</sup> which may support the hypothesis that al-Malik al-Nāṣir sent an embassy to the Mongol khan at a very early stage. If this was the case, the idea may have been that of the Ayyubid ruler's minister, Zayn al-Dīn al-Ḥāfiẓī. The latter, since his mission to Möngke, had been endeavouring to bring about an alliance between his master and the Ilkhans. In any case, he was in contact with Hülegü, urging him to conquer Bilād al-Shām, which would, he argued, be easy given the divisions between the various Ayyubid princes.<sup>21</sup>

### *Two Further 'Letters'?*

The sources give insight as to the chaotic situation prevailing in the region after the fall of Baghdad. They often are muddled and contradictory regarding the dates of al-Malik al-'Azīz's embassies to Hülegü. According to the Pseudo-Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, in 656/1258–59 the Ilkhan repeated his demand to al-Malik al-Nāṣir. The latter once more sent his son bearing gifts. This account supports

17 On this letter, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 22–23.

18 Al-Maqrīzī 1:500.

19 Hülegü's request for military reinforcements received no concrete response.

20 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 508.

21 Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 334.

that of Barhebraeus mentioned above. Hülegü reportedly told him in anger, "We asked your father" (*naḥnu ṭalabnā abak*), but the author does not mention any letter.<sup>22</sup> For the same year, al-Maqrīzī writes that al-Malik al-Nāṣir's son returned from Hülegü's court with a letter, the text of which he gives.<sup>23</sup> Should this be taken to refer to a second letter?

Finally, according to *Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal* in 657/1259 Mongol envoys brought a letter to al-Malik al-Nāṣir; a letter, this time, full of threats of a rather eschatological tone.<sup>24</sup> In this letter Hülegü says: "We asked al-Malik al-Nāṣir Yūsuf to come [in person], not his son [...]. We, therefore, will go to him."<sup>25</sup> This may have been a third document, carried by Mongol envoys at the end of 657/1259. The letter reflects Hülegü's growing anger with the Ayyubid ruler.

Al-Malik al-Nāṣir, incapable of taking a clear stance towards Hülegü, took fright at the news that Mongol troops were advancing into Syria. He broke his pact of allegiance to Möngke and sought an alliance with the Mamluk sultan of Cairo, Quṭuz.<sup>26</sup> Hülegü invaded Syria, taking Aleppo on 9 Ṣafar 658/24 January 1260. A few days later Damascus fell to his general-in-chief Kitbugha. Hülegü, who himself had remained in northern Syria, returned to Azerbaijan, leaving a small Mongol detachment under the orders of his military commander.<sup>27</sup>

After the capture of Damascus, Hülegü seems to have forgiven al-Malik al-Nāṣir his betrayal, as the latter broke his alliance with the Mamluk sultan and went to Tabriz along with the other Ayyubid princes.<sup>28</sup> But at the end of Shawwāl 658/October 1260, Hülegü learned that Quṭuz's armies had defeated the Mongol forces stationed in Palestine. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir was then accused of treason and executed along with the other Ayyubid princes who were in Tabriz.<sup>29</sup>

22 "Pseudo-Ibn al-Fuwaṭī," *al-Ḥawādith al-jāmi'a wal-tajārib al-nāfi'a fi-l-mi'a al-ṣābi'a* (Baghdad, 1932), 339. This chronicle was falsely attributed to Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, author of the biographical dictionary (*Talkhīṣ majma' al-ādāb fi mujam al-alqāb*, ed. M. Jawād, 4 vols. (Damas, 1962). See Charles Melville, "Ebn al-Fowaṭī," *Elr* VIII:25–26.

23 Al-Maqrīzī I:506.

24 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 484–485.

25 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 485.

26 Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 354.

27 The sources give varying estimates of the forces present, but agree that the Mongol combatants were outnumbered, see Reuven Amitai, "'Ayn Jālūt Revisited," 123–129.

28 Stephen Humphreys, *From Saladin to the Mongols*, 357.

29 Bar Hebraeus, *Chronicon Syriacum*, 512–513.

## The Complexity of the Transmissions

I have found citations of these letters in eleven sources of varying periods, dating from the second half of the thirteenth century to the seventeenth century.<sup>30</sup> The version given by Barhebraeus, copied in his *Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal*,<sup>31</sup> is the oldest version of one of these letters, but this does not mean that the letter in question was chronologically the first one to have been composed. The evidence of this Jacobite author is of particular importance since he had access to official documents during his long stays in Marāgha, as he explains in his Syriac chronicle. It is probable that he saw the official letter, or a copy, in the Mongol chancellery.

All the other sources are from much later. Other versions of a letter very similar to that transmitted by Barhebraeus are to be found in Waṣṣāf's chronicle<sup>32</sup> and in two collections of assorted documents, *Safīnat-i Tabrīz*, compiled between 721–3/1321–23 by Abū l-Majd al-Tabrīzī,<sup>33</sup> and *Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī*, compiled in 825/1430–31 by Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Ahl, at the time of the Timurid sultan Shāh Rukh.<sup>34</sup> An examination of all these documents reveals that what we have here consists of five different transmissions of perhaps the same letter.

30 See the summary table of the sources and the Qur'anic citations included in the letters at Annex 1. Part of this correspondence has been reproduced, without any critical apparatus by Hein Horst, "Hülägüs Unterwerfingsbriefe an die Machthaber Syriens und Ägyptens," *Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 150/2 (2000): 429–440, 444–451. A reproduction, again without critical apparatus, of the letter transmitted by Rashīd al-Dīn and the three letters copied by al-Suyūṭī, but following Ibn al-'Imād's transmission, is to be found in *Wathā'iq al-ḥurūb al-ṣālibīyya wa-l-ghazā al-mughūlī li-l-'ālam al-islāmī*, ed. M.M. Ḥammāda (Beirut, 1979), 351–353.

31 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 484–485.

32 Waṣṣāf, 42–44.

33 Abū l-Majd al-Tabrīzī probably saw a copy of the transmitted letter in *Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal*, see *Safīneh-ye Tabrīz. A Treasury of Persian Literature and Islamic Philosophy, Mysticism, and Sciences. Facsimile Edition of a Manuscript Compiled and Copied in 721–3/1321–23* (Tehran: Iran University Press, 2003), 439–440. This collection is made up of a great many religious (juridical and mystical) texts, philosophical texts, astronomical tables, and so on. The copy of the letter in this selection of documents confirms that it was well known, probably because of its religious content.

34 This letter was the subject of a short article by Sima Sadjed-Orsini, "La lettre de Naṣīr Ṭūsī à Malik al-Nāṣīr," in *Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī. Philosophe et savant du XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, eds. N. Pourjavady and Ž. Vesel (Tehran, 2000), 191–194. In this article, the author studies a version of the letter, which appears in a manuscript of *Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī* held in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris. The author was unaware that a critical edition already existed [*Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī*, ed. Ḥeṣmat Mu'ayyad, 2 vols. (Tehran, 1356sh./1977) 11:121–123], and mistakenly

“Transmission 1,” which I will name the “Persian transmission,” includes the versions given by Barhebraeus, al-Tabrīzī, Waṣṣāf<sup>35</sup> and Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf. I include Barhebraeus’s version in the Persian transmission because of his proximity to the Ilkhans. He gives a long version of a letter made up of two main parts. Part A explains the reasons for the taking of Baghdad and the execution of the caliph. The latter is accused of lying and of misconduct towards his subjects. The arguments given are justified in religious terms by Qur’ānic citations. The lengthier Part B seeks by contrast to discredit the Ayyubid prince, who is threatened with divine punishment should he fail to come to submit to Hülegü in person. Although there are a number of differences between the four versions of this letter, we may suppose that the original source used by the later authors—al-Tabrīzī, Waṣṣāf and Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf—was the document copied by Barhebraeus, or at least another broadly similar copy.<sup>36</sup>

“Transmission 2” we owe to three Mamluk authors. The Tripoli historian al-Qartāy (d. 733/1332–33),<sup>37</sup> in his *Ta’rīkh al-nawādir*, cites three successive, very short letters, including verse. Al-Qartāy’s version was copied by Ibn al-Furāt in his *Ta’rīkh al-duwal wa-l-mulūk* under the authority of the Tripolitanian. Four decades later, al-Maqrīzī gives their version in the form of a single letter, which, he says, was brought back by al-Malik al-‘Azīz in 657/29 December 1258–17 December 1259.<sup>38</sup> “Transmission 2” is indeed a variation of part A of the Persian “Transmission 1.” It includes different Qur’ānic citations, as well as verse elements, which briefly illustrate some of the ideas set out in part B. In this transmission by authors writing in Arabic, we also find an expression referring to Hülegü, which is made up of Persian words (*shāhānshāh ruwā zamīn*), corresponding to the Persian *ruy-i zamīn*, which we will refer to again in analysing the content of the letters.

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follows Yūsuf Ahl’s attribution of the letter to al-Malik al-Nāṣir, sultan of Egypt [*sic*]. This error on the part of the compiler of the collection would seem to result from the letter’s subsequent adoption as a model for a letter sent to the Mamluk sultan Quṭuz, see in *infra*.

35 Waṣṣāf introduces the letter as a “book of conquest” (*fath-nāma*)—that is, of Hülegü’s conquest of Baghdad.

36 Waṣṣāf gives the longest version of this letter, including an extended part B made up primarily of Qur’ānic verses.

37 Al-Qartāy’s chronicle is preserved in the library at Berlin and Gotha. The part of interest here is that held at Gotha (Arabic manuscript 1572, copied in 789), see Hein Horst, “Hülägüs Unterwerfungsbriefe,” 447, n. 37. Since I have not been able to examine this manuscript, I rely here on Horst’s publication of it, 448–449. On al-Qartāy, see Claude Cahen, “La chronique de Ķirtāy et les Francs de Syrie,” *JA* (1937): 140–142.

38 Al-Maqrīzī 1:506.

“Transmission 3” is provided, under their accounts of the year 658/1259–60, by two Syrian authors, al-Jazarī in his *Ḥawādith al-zamān*<sup>39</sup> and al-Kutubī in his *ʿUyūn al-tawārīkh*.<sup>40</sup> These authors provide their pretty similar versions of a single letter. This transmission too is a variant of Part A of Barhebraeus’s long version of the correspondence, and, as in the previous case, it includes verse and some elements from Part B, but, oddly, no Qur’anic citations. According to al-Jazarī, this letter was read out in the great mosque in Damascus.<sup>41</sup> This is plausible, given its content, on which we shall focus in our analysis of the various documents.

“Transmission 4,” which is of much later date, is found in al-Suyūṭī’s *Ta’rīkh al-khulafāʾ*<sup>42</sup> and in Ibn al-ʿImād’s biographical dictionary, *Shadharāt al-dhahab*, in his entry on the last Abbasid caliph.<sup>43</sup> His version is a word-for-word copy of al-Suyūṭī’s. The latter gives three distinct letters. The authenticity of the first is extremely problematic. None of the earlier transmitters mention it. One could accept Amitai’s hypothesis that this first letter was preserved only by al-Suyūṭī, and that al-Malik al-Nāṣir’s son may have brought it back from his first mission to Hülegü.<sup>44</sup> The content merely reminds the Ayyubid prince that he should learn from what had happened to the caliph. He is invited to come in person to make his submission. In any case, even if this letter did in fact exist, it is of far less interest than the long version in “Transmission 1” or the shorter version given by al-Qartāy, Ibn al-Furāt and al-Maqrīzī. Furthermore, the language in which this “first letter” is composed is not the flowery and faultless Arabic typical of all diplomatic correspondence. One might suggest that it is in fact a written transmission of a message that Hülegü delivered orally to al-Malik al-Nāṣir’s son during his first mission. But why, then, is it found only in this later author? The second letter includes elements that occur in various parts of the documents transmitted by the other Mamluk authors. Its argument is illustrated with two Qur’anic citations. Finally, the third letter is broadly similar to al-Jazarī’s version. All three letters include verse.

I have classed as “Transmission 5” a letter which appears in Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh*.<sup>45</sup> This bears only a distant relationship to part A of the long version of the letter copied by Barhebraeus. The text has, so to speak, disap-

39 Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, ed. H. Horst in “Hülegüs Unterwerfungsbriefe,” 451.

40 Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī, *ʿUyūn al-tawārīkh* (Bagdad, 1980) xx:225.

41 Al-Jazarī, *Ḥawādith al-zamān*, ed. H. Horst, 449.

42 Al-Suyūṭī, *Ta’rīkh al-khulafāʾ* (Cairo, 1959), 473–474.

43 Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt al-dhahab* (Damascus & Beirut, 1991) vii:470–472.

44 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 22.

45 Rashīd al-Dīn/Alizade iii:63.

peared into a profusion of Qur'ānic citations intended to justify the execution of the Abbasid caliph. One must bear in mind that Rashīd al-Dīn held important positions in the Ilkhanid administration. It is not surprising that he would seek to establish a religious justification for the fall of the Abbasid caliphate at the hands of the new rulers of Persia.

### A Corpus of Letters with Radical Religious Reasoning

As we have seen, the transmission of these various letters is highly complex. But the historical context may help us to suggest some hypotheses regarding the order in which they were sent by Hülegü, considering the repeated demands, attested in all the sources, that were addressed to al-Malik al-Nāṣir calling on him to come in person and swear allegiance to the Mongol khan. One may suppose, given that he never went himself but preferred to send his young son, that the tone of the letters would have become more and more threatening. Indeed, the sending of al-Malik al-'Azīz was itself a serious insult in Hülegü's eyes. At the beginning of his account of the events of 657/1259, Ibn Kathīr takes care to specify that al-Malik al-'Azīz was young (*wa huwa saḡhūr*). The Ilkhan paid no attention to the presents that he was given, but flew into a terrible rage against al-Malik al-Nāṣir who, panic-stricken, took refuge with his family at Karak in Palestine.<sup>46</sup> It may be that the long version here designated as "Transmission 1," which is extremely threatening, was the last letter addressed to al-Malik al-Nāṣir, the one which Barhebraeus states was brought to him by the Mongol envoys in late 657/1259. The Persian authors who transmit this document state that it was composed by Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and its style, argument, and choice of Qur'ānic citations are flawless.

#### *The Question of the other 'Letters'*

It is difficult to establish the chronology of the remaining letters. These various "short" versions all refer, in different terms, to the fall of Baghdad and the reasons for the execution of the caliph. Al-Qartāy and Ibn al-Furāt transmit three documents, which bear only a very distant relationship to those quoted by al-Suyūṭī in his *Ta'rikh al-khulafā'*. As regards the existence or otherwise of a first letter sent by the Ilkhan to the Ayyubid prince, as we have seen above such a letter has been preserved only by al-Suyūṭī.<sup>47</sup> This letter deals with the capture of Baghdad and, as in most of the correspondences the caliph is not

46 Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa-l-nihāya* (Beirut, 1997) 1x:98.

47 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mamluks and Mongols*, 22.

referred to by his title, this being a way of assigning him a lower rank than Hülegü. He is called *ṣāhib al-bilād*. It is stated that after the destruction of the city and the massacre of its inhabitants by the sword of God (*bi-sayf Allāh*), the caliph gave his allegiance to the Ilkhan (*dakhala taḥta ‘ubūdiyyat-nā*), but that his lies required him to be put to death (*istaḥaqqā al-i‘dām*).<sup>48</sup> The use of this pretext to justify the murder of the caliph must be understood in the context of Mongol culture, in which lying was considered a very serious act, tantamount to treason.<sup>49</sup> All these deeds are justified by a Qur’anic citation: “And they shall find all they wrought present.”<sup>50</sup> At the end of the letter, al-Malik al-Nāṣir is asked to leave his fortress, in other words to go to the Mongol khan and make his submission. The relatively less aggressive tone of this letter may in fact represent Hülegü’s first demand that the Ayyubid prince come before him to swear allegiance.

To return to the letters transmitted by al-Qarṭāy and Ibn al-Furāt, the first letter of “Transmission 2” simply reminds the “sultan of Aleppo” (*sulṭān Ḥalab*), in different terms and more concisely, that Baghdad had been conquered and the caliph, having responded with lies, had been put to death.<sup>51</sup> Al-Qarṭāy and Ibn al-Furāt then report that Hülegü sent a further letter “illustrated with phrases of poetry well known among the people.”<sup>52</sup> But on studying these verses it becomes clear that they are in fact intended as commentary on the story of the caliph’s death: “How many men have passed the night in happiness, little thinking that death would descend upon them unexpected.”<sup>53</sup> The beginning of the second letter transmitted by al-Qarṭāy and Ibn al-Furāt seems to have been truncated. The letter begins, after a section in verse, with the following sentence: “As soon as you have read my letter, make haste with your subjects, your goods and your horsemen to submit to the sultan of the Earth (*sulṭān al-arḍ*), the king of kings (*shāhānshāh*), the Face of the Earth (*ruwā zamīn*).”<sup>54</sup> The appearance of these fragmentary Persian terms in the middle of an Arabic text may suggest that this perhaps represents an oral transmission of the message sent to al-Malik al-Nāṣir by Hülegü, before it was put into writing.

48 Al-Suyūṭī, 473.

49 On the punishment for lying instituted by Genghis Khan, see *Secret History* § 203.

50 Qur’ān 18:49

51 Al-Qarṭāy/Ibn al-Furāt, ed. H. Horst, 448.

52 Al-Qarṭāy/Ibn al-Furāt, ed. H. Horst, 448.

53 Al-Qarṭāy/Ibn al-Furāt, ed. H. Horst, 448.

54 Al-Qarṭāy/Ibn al-Furāt, ed. H. Horst, 448.

Finally, two verses are presented as illustrating a third letter. But here again, they are in fact a commentary in verse on the preceding matter: "Where to take refuge? No fugitive could find safe haven. The two elements, earth and water, belong to me. Our fearsome strength has subdued the lions. The emirs and viziers are subordinate to us."<sup>55</sup> It may be noted that these letters include some passages, which also appear in the documents transmitted by al-Suyūṭī, including a number of verses. It is likely that the "Transmission 2" of al-Qarṭāy and Ibn al-Furāt represents one single letter.

This hypothesis would appear to be supported by the fact that when al-Maqrīzī, almost a century later, gives this same text practically word for word, he quite logically presents it as a single letter. It may represent the second message addressed to al-Malik al-Nāṣir, following his son's second mission in 656/1258. This "Transmission 2" of al-Qarṭāy, Ibn al-Furāt was reinterpreted by the Syrian historians al-Jazarī and Ibn Shākir al-Kutubī. They stripped it of the Qur'ānic citations, but gave the fall of the Abbasid caliphate a strong eschatological overtone: "We are the armies of God" (*naḥnu junūd Allāh*).<sup>56</sup> In this text, the Mongols have come by God's order (*bi-amr Allāh*) to eradicate violence (*al-'itīy*), coercion (*al-tajabbur*), oppression (*al-ṭaghī*) and arrogance (*al-takabbur*). These faults are all implicitly attributed to the caliph.<sup>57</sup> His misconduct is given as the reason why Hülegü's armies were sent by God against Baghdad to wipe out the Abbasid caliphate: "We are the armies of destruction (*naḥnu juyūsh al-halaka*), we are not armies for [upholding] royalty (*lā juyūsh li-malakīya*)."<sup>58</sup>

This Syrian "Transmission 3" is entirely in line with the Mongol ideology expressed in the demands for submission that Güyük and Möngke sent to the Latin West. In the Latin translation of Güyük's letter, the Heaven of the Mongols is replaced by *Dei fortitudo*. The concept is made fathomable to the addressee in terms originating in his own culture. Similarly, and for the same reasons, Eternal Heaven is replaced in Hülegü's letter by the name of the God of Islam, Allāh. One notes, furthermore, that al-Jazarī's version is not a direct threat against al-Malik al-Nāṣir, but seeks to justify the intrusion of a non-Muslim power into *dār al-islām* in terms of religion and salvation. This is nothing other than the purpose of apocalyptic literature.<sup>59</sup>

55 Al-Qarṭāy/Ibn al-Furāt, ed. H. Horst, 449.

56 Al-Jazarī, ed. H. Horst, 451.

57 Al-Jazarī, ed. H. Horst, 451.

58 Al-Jazarī, ed. H. Horst, 451.

59 On this aspect of apocalyptic literature in the Mongol period, see chapter 10.



### *The 'Letter' Transmitted by Rashīd al-Dīn*

Before analysing "Transmission 1," let me return to the letter given by Rashīd al-Dīn.<sup>60</sup> The text that he reproduces is similar to version A of all the transmissions and, as with the Syrian historians' "Transmission 3," is centred on the person of the caliph. The Qur'ānic citations, which illustrate every phrase, have no other purpose than to justify, with the support of religious arguments, the murder of the head of the *umma*. But here again, the message is a purely Mongol one. It is recalled that before attacking Baghdad, Hülegü warned the caliph of what would happen if he did not agree to submit. A line from the Qur'ān tells him of his fate should he refuse: "How evil will be the morning of them that warned!"<sup>61</sup> The caliph is then compared to Pharaoh, as he has disobeyed by refusing to come and swear allegiance to Hülegü: "But Pharaoh rebelled against the Messenger, so We seized him remorselessly."<sup>62</sup> This verse of the Qur'ān implicitly compares Hülegü to the prophet Muḥammad. But this citation from Holy Scriptures should also be interpreted as pointing to the caliph's refusal to obey Eternal Heaven of the Mongols, here transposed as the God of Islam. The caliph is reminded that, had he submitted, he might "be repose and ease, and a Garden of Delight,"<sup>63</sup> in other words the Paradise that is reserved for those who respect Islamic law. Any Muslim could readily understand these Qur'ānic fragments. It may be that Rashīd al-Dīn started with well-known material concerning the capture of Baghdad and the abolition of the Abbasid caliphate, and then chose to illustrate his account with all these Qur'ānic citations in order to justify Mongol control over the heart of the eastern Islamic empire. Obviously that Rashīd al-Dīn's version does not directly correspond to any one transmission.

### *The 'Persian' Version*

We have noted above that the first copy of this version is found in Barhebraeus's *Mukhtaṣar ta'riḫ al-duwal*. This copy deserves particular attention due to its content and its well-developed reasoning. The other versions of this text present some differences, probably originating in the documents relied upon by their respective copyists. For his part, Waṣṣāf includes many additional Qur'ānic quotes, especially at the end.<sup>64</sup> Part A of this letter is flawlessly constructed and sets forth arguments also given in the other transmissions concerning the

60 See the translation of the text in Annex 2.

61 Qur'ān 37:177.

62 Qur'ān 73:16.

63 Qur'ān 56:89.

64 See Annex 1.

reasons for the fall of Baghdad. As in the other letters, it is entirely based on religious reasoning. This letter is composed in perfect Arabic, in rhymed prose (*sajf*). It begins with a menacing statement directed at the Ayyubid ruler: "Let al-Malik al-Nāṣir know [. . .], Baghdad has been conquered by the sword of God Most High (*bi-sayf Allāh ta'ālā*)."<sup>65</sup> The caliph's title is omitted: he is referred to as the "master of the city." This section is illustrated with two Qur'ānic quotes: "God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves;"<sup>65</sup> "And they shall find all they wrought present."<sup>66</sup> These fragments of Qur'ānic verses are intended to give an eschatological meaning to the fall of Baghdad. Hülegü is presented as the instrument of divine will: the caliph and the *umma* have not respected their pact with the one God. This introductory section ends by emphasizing the aid that God has provided to the Mongols: "We have won by the force of God (*balaghnā bi-quwwat Allāh*). And, with the help of God almighty, we are increasing (*bi-ma'ūnat Allāh ta'ālā*)."<sup>67</sup> The Arabic formula *bi-quwwat Allāh* corresponds to the formula "by the force of Eternal Heaven" in the letters written in Mongolian.

Part B has an even stronger eschatological tone than in al-Jazarī's short version: "We are the army of God on his Earth (*naḥnu jund Allāh fī arḍi-hi*). He has created us and has given us power over those who have aroused his anger."<sup>68</sup> The Ayyubid prince is then attacked for his conduct, just as the caliph is, but in even harsher terms. He is accused of not observing the dietary prohibitions imposed by the Sharī'a. He does not respect the faith, he has shown blame-worthy innovation (*al-bid'a*), and he approves of debauchery with young boys (*al-fisq bi-l-ṣibyān*).<sup>69</sup> A further Qur'ānic citation illustrates this entire series of reproaches, which are intended to prove that the Ayyubid prince is a bad Muslim: "And those who do wrong shall surely know by what overturning they will be overturned."<sup>70</sup> Waṣṣāf prefaces this verse with a further scriptural authority: "Therefore today you shall be rewarded with the chastisement of humiliation for that you waxed proud in the earth without right, and for your ungodliness."<sup>71</sup> These Qur'ānic fragments present al-Malik al-Nāṣir as a ruler devoid of the virtue of justice, which is indispensable for the exercise of power. There follows an argument, which counterposes the statuses of infidel

65 Qur'ān 13:11.

66 Qur'ān 18:49.

67 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 484.

68 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 484.

69 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 485.

70 Qur'ān 26:228.

71 Qur'ān 46:20.

(*al-kāfir*) and libertine (*al-fājir*). This exposition may confirm the hypothesis that the letter was drawn up by the Shi'ite scholar Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, as all the Persian sources indicate. He writes:

You are convinced that we are infidels: we are convinced that you are libertines. The Almighty has subjected you to our rule [. . .]. Act justly (*al-ṣawāb*) before the unbelief (*al-kafara*) lights its fire and starts to burn [. . .]. Choose in your mind the way of recompense, of good works (*thawāb*).<sup>72</sup>

The failure to respect the Shari'a has as an immediate consequence the rise of injustice, since *dār al-islām* is equally the place where justice reigns, *dār al-'adl*. This vision of perfect justice brought about by the respect of Islamic law is just as much part of theories of government.<sup>73</sup> However, some authors prefer a just infidel (*kāfir*) to an unjust Muslim ruler.<sup>74</sup> According to Ibn al-Ṭiḡtaqa, writing in 1302, after the conquest of Baghdad Hülegü asked the '*ulamā*' for a legal opinion (*fatwā*) on the question: "Who is preferable, an infidel ruler who is righteous or Muslim ruler who is unjust?" But, only the Shi'i scholar Raḏī al-Dīn ibn Ṭāwūs was willing to put his signature to it.<sup>75</sup> Hence the importance of morality, for in its absence, under the reign of a monarch considered libertine (*al-fājir*), and therefore immoral from the Islamic point of view gives way to disorder. Here the positions of Hülegü and al-Malik al-Nāṣir are reversed in favour of the Mongol khan, who appears as the perfect ruler, and not only that, but also the bearer of a divine warning: "He who has threatened is excused (*a'dhara man andhara*). He who has warned is just (*anṣafa man ḥadhdhara*)."<sup>76</sup> This phrase echoes the Qur'ānic verse: "We never chastise, until We send forth a Messenger."<sup>77</sup> In this letter, Hülegü is subtly presented as a "pseudo-prophet" of God. He has come to announce to men the hour of the abolition of the

72 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 485.

73 See Ann K.S. Lambton, *Theory and Practice in Medieval Persian Government* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980); *State and Government in Medieval Islam* (London, 1981); Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam* (New York, 2004).

74 Joseph Sadan, "Community' and 'Extra-Community' as a Legal Literary Problem," *Israel Oriental Studies* 10 (1980): 108.

75 As Reuven Amitai ("Hülegü and his Wise Men: *topos* or Reality," 21) points out this story "smacks of *post facto* apologetics." The author's intention would have been also to justify the rule of the non-Muslim Hülegü, see Reuven Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement*, 98, n. 44.

76 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 485.

77 Qur'ān 17:15.

Abbasid caliphate and the destruction of the lands of Islam, including those belonging to al-Malik al-Nāṣir, who appears as a spreader of corruption.<sup>78</sup> The letter also contains another reference to the mandate of Eternal Heaven which has been granted to the Mongols: "We hold the Earth from east to west," a formula which appears repeatedly in the Mongols' diplomatic correspondence.

### The Formulation of a Model

The Persian "Transmission 1" clearly became a model for this epistolary genre. The letter's fame is evidenced by its having been copied, with some changes, in collections of documents. We may assume that the Ilkhanid chancellery probably held several copies, and that, as the version copied by Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf at the time of Shāh Rukh shows, the document was still preserved into the Timurid period. Therefore, his letter may represent some kind of formulation, apparently by Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, of an authoritative model of diplomatic correspondence in Hülegü's chancellery.

The letter was to have a long life. In 658/1260, it served as the model for a letter that Hülegü sent to the Mamluk sultan Quṭuz after learning of the defeat of his general Kitbugha at the battle of 'Ayn Jālūt.<sup>79</sup> That this "authoritative model" should be used to threaten Quṭuz is not in itself at all surprising. Hülegü states his intention of overcoming the Mamluks of Egypt and further pursuing his conquests. The letter is perfectly adapted to the situation. But that it would be used more than 130 years later by Timur to threaten the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Barqūq (784–801/1382–98) is more intriguing: the same letter was brought to Cairo by Timurid emissaries in Rabī' II 796/Februar 1394.<sup>80</sup>

78 [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtaṣar*, 484.

79 Text of this letter in al-Qarṭāy, ms. at Gotha 1655, fol. 59v–60v (H. Horst, 453, n. 95); *Kanz* VIII:47–48; Ibn al-Furāt, ms. at Vatican, Arabic 726, fol. 243v (H. Horst, 453, n. 99); *Ṣubḥ* VIII:63–64, under the date 758; al-Maqrīzī I:514–515. A Persian-language version of this letter, completely different from the Arabic transmissions, can be found in Rashīd al-Dīn/Alizade III:71.

80 Text of this letter in al-Maqrīzī V:349–351; *Nujūm* XII:49–52; Ibn 'Arabshāh, *ʿAjā'ib al-maqdūr fi nawā'ib Timūr*, ed. 'A.M. 'Umar (Damascus, 1979), 97–98. English translation in J.H. Sanders, *Tamerlan or Timur the Great Amir* (London, 1936), 91–94. The transmission of the letters exchanged between Timur and Barqūq are also hard to study that of the Ilkhans. There are several versions in Mamluks chronicles and some descriptions in Timurids sources, see Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 171–187.

In an article published in 1972, Brinner compared the letter sent by Hülegü to that composed by Timur's chancellery for Barqūq.<sup>81</sup> At the time, not all the sources giving the "authoritative model" of Hülegü's third letter were available to him. He was aware of Waṣṣāf and some Mamluk writers, but, crucially, he did not take into account the version given by Barhebraeus. As for the different versions of Timur's letter, he had available to him those transmitted by Ibn 'Arabshāh and many Mamluk authors. Brinner "reconstituted" the letter sent by Timur to the Mamluk sultan Barqūq. The outcome is a hybrid version with which the author has combined the texts of Hülegü's letters and those of Timur. This reconstruction of the text somewhat distorts any comparison with the initial model, the version composed by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. But in any case, Timur's letter bears many similarities to the model created by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. One may therefore ask why, more than 130 years later, one would resort to a letter composed on Hülegü's orders. Here I differ with Brinner, who considers the psychology of the scribe to be a principle factor.<sup>82</sup> On this basis, he sees two possible explanations: either the scribe looked for an easy way out by re-using a model that was already available in the Timurid chancellery, or he wished to send this particular threatening letter because it ought to be understood by his counterpart in the Mamluk chancellery.

Here again, the historical context can assist us in understanding why this letter from the Mongol conqueror of Baghdad was re-used by Timur. In my opinion it is rather the latter's psychology that must be considered. Towards the new year of 795–96/1393–94, Timur, although a Muslim, set out to conquer the lands of Islam modelling his campaigns entirely on Hülegü's: he annexed eastern Iran in 795/1393, conquered Baghdad in the summer of 795/1393, then campaigned against the Ottomans in eastern Anatolia and against the Mamluks in northern Syria, with Aleppo and Damascus as his main objectives. Timur's capture of Baghdad impelled the Jalayirid ruler of Azerbaijan and Mesopotamia, Aḥmad b. Uways, to flee, taking refuge in Mamluk territory with Sultan Barqūq. He arrived in Cairo in Rabi' I 796/January 1394.<sup>83</sup> Might one not imagine that Timur was seeking to present himself to the Mamluk sultan as a "second Hülegü," when he had his secretary use as a model for his threatening letter to Sultan Barqūq the missive sent by the Mongol conqueror of Baghdad? Timur's aim was to become master of Bilād al-Shām and Egypt, thus accom-

81 William M. Brinner, "Some Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Documents from Non-Archival Sources," *Israēl Oriental Studies* 2 (1972): 127–136.

82 William M. Brinner, "Some Ayyūbid and Mamlūk Documents," 126.

83 On Timur's campaigns in Syria, see Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, pp. 168–197.

plishing the unrealized dream of the Ilkhans. As a Muslim, he could not openly claim the mandate of Eternal Heaven to justify his conquest of the Abbasid capital, but since this model letter had a strong eschatological tone and was based on Islamic religious reasoning, it was perfectly adapted to the historical situation at the time.

In any case, returning to the complex nature of the transmission of the first two letters sent by Hülegü to al-Malik al-Nāṣir, several hypotheses may be proposed as to the causes of this complexity. It may have its origins in the confusion of the Mamluk sources, often contradictory regarding the dates of the various embassies of al-Malik al-Nāṣir's son and the letters, which he may or may not have brought back. However, a second factor may be involved. The complexity of the transmissions may also reveal the hesitancy of the inchoate Ilkhanid chancellery up to the point when the Mongol khan's famous counsellor, Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, drew up an exemplary model of diplomatic correspondence. This "authoritative model" was then copied down through the centuries, and survived right up to Timur's time.<sup>84</sup> Timur, like the Mongols whose successor he claimed to be, set out to conquer the world, and he was seen in the Mamluk sultanate as a Tatar (i.e. a Mongol), in particular in the Syrian region where he was responsible for even more destruction than the founder of the Ilkhanid dynasty and his successors.

The "letters," as variously transmitted, reflect Mongol political ideology: the obligation upon all peoples to submit to the line of Genghis Khan, bearer of the mandate of Eternal Heaven. The latter, in order for them to make sense to the addressee of Hülegü's letters, is referred to as Allāh. So that a Muslim ruler would understand the message delivered, most of these letters are full of Qur'ānic citations, justifying their arguments in religious terms. The third letter, which I have described as the "authoritative model," with its strong eschatological overtones, is transmitted only by Persian authors and by Barhebraeus. This is because it had become a standard reference that was carefully preserved in the Persian chancelleries. As has been observed, this model was re-used on several occasions. Hülegü's letters to the Ayyubid prince al-Malik al-Nāṣir were the starting point of a long tradition of exchanges of embassies and diplomatic correspondence between the Ilkhans and the Mamluks that would continue after the Ayyubids had disappeared from Syria-Palestine.

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84 It is probably the reason that Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Ahl copied in 835/1431–1432 this letter in his *Farā'id-i Ghīyāthī*.

## Annex 1

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<b>Author</b>	Ibn al-ʿIbrī/ Barhebraeus (d. 685/1286)
<b>Work</b>	<i>Mukhtaṣar taʾrīkh al-duwal</i>
<b>Qurʾān</b>	God changes not what is in a people, until they change what is in themselves (13: 11); And they shall find all they wrought present, and thy Lord shall not wrong anyone (18: 49); And those who do wrong shall surely know by what overturning they will be overturned (26: 227);
<b>Author</b>	Rashīd al-Dīn (d. 718/1323)
<b>Work</b>	<i>Jāmiʿ al-tawārīkh</i>
<b>Qurʾān</b>	How evil be the morning of them that are warned! (37: 177); <i>But Pharaoh rebelled against the Messenger, so We seized him remorselessly</i> (73: 16); There shall be repose and ease, and a Garden of Delight (56: 89); Shall We tell you will be the greater losers in their works? Those whose striving goes astray in the present life, while they think that they are working good deeds (18: 103–104);
<b>Author</b>	Abū l-Majd al-Tabrīzī (text copied ca. 721–723/1321–1323)
<b>Work</b>	<i>Safīnat-i Tabrīz</i>
<b>Qurʾān</b>	Therefore today you shall be recompensed with the chastisement of humiliation for that you waxes proud in the earth without right, and for your ungodliness (46: 20);
<b>Author</b>	Al-Qartāy (d. 733/1332–1333)
<b>Work</b>	<i>Taʾrīkh al-nawādir</i>
<b>Qurʾān</b>	She said, “Kings, when they enter a city, disorder it and make the mighty ones of its inhabitants abased. Even so they too will do.” (27: 34); That a man shall have to his account only as he had laboured, and that his labouring shall surely be seen, then he shall be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense (53: 39–41);
<b>Author</b>	Waṣṣāf (d. 735/1334)
<b>Work</b>	<i>Tārīkh-i Waṣṣāf</i>

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Qurʾān	<p>And they shall find all they wrought present, and thy Lord shall not wrong anyone (18: 49);</p> <p>Therefore today you shall be recompensed with the chastisement of humiliation for that you waxes proud in the earth without right, and for your ungodliness (46: 20);</p> <p>And those who do wrong shall surely know by what overturning they will be overturned (26: 227);</p> <p>And what shall teach what is the Pit? A blazing Fire! (101: 10–11);</p> <p>Dost thou perceive so much as one of them, or hear of them a whisper? (19: 98);</p> <p>God's command comes; so seek not to hasten it. Glory be to Him!</p> <p>Hight be He exalted above that they associate with Him! (16: 1);</p> <p>It is nothing but a reminder unto all beings, and you shall surely know its tiding after a while (38: 87–88);</p>
Author	Al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442)
Work	<i>Kitāb al-sulūk li-mariʿfat duwal al-mulūk</i>
Qurʾān	<p>She said, “Kings, when they enter a city, disorder it and make the mighty ones of its inhabitants abased. Even so they too will do.” (27: 34);</p> <p>That a man shall have to his account only as he had laboured, and that his labouring shall surely be seen, then he shall be recompensed for it with the fullest recompense (53: 39–41);</p>
Author	Jalāl al-Dīn Yūsuf Ahl (text copied in 835/1431–1432)
Work	<i>Farāʿid-i Giyāthī</i>
Qurʾān	<p>And those who do wrong shall surely know by what overturning they will be overturned (26: 227);</p> <p>We never chastise, until We send forth a Messenger (17: 15);</p>

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## Annex 2

Letter transmitted by Rashīd al-Dīn, Rashīd al-Dīn/Alizade 111:63; English translation from W.M. Thackston, *Rashiduddin Fazullah's Jamī'ut-tawarikh: Compendium of Chronicles*, in *Classical writings of the Medieval Histories of the Mongol Dynasties*, 3 vols (London: Tauris, 2012) 111:355.



We stopped in Baghdad in the year 656, and, *how evil be the morning of them that are warned!*<sup>85</sup> We called upon its lord, but he refused, so he suffered what the text says: *But Pharaoh rebelled against the Messenger, so We seized him remorselessly.*<sup>86</sup> Now we call upon you to obey us. If you come, well and good: *there shall be repose and ease, and a Garden of Delight.*<sup>87</sup> If you refuse, woe betide you. Do not be like one who digs his own grave or bloodies his own nose lest you be one of those whose works are vain: *Shall We tell you will be the greater losers in their works? Those whose striving goes astray in the present life, while they think that they are working good deeds.*<sup>88</sup> *Neither will this be difficult with God.*<sup>89</sup> And peace be with him who follows the right path.

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85 Qur'ān, 37:177.

86 Qur'ān, 73:16.

87 Qur'ān, 56:89.

88 Qur'ān, 18:103–104.

89 Qur'ān, 14:20.

**PART 4**

*Mamluks and Ilkhans. The Quest of Legitimacy*





## Legitimizing A Low-Born, Regicide Monarch. Baybars and the Ilkhans

Between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, Syria-Palestine and Egypt were the scene of a number of political upheavals, most memorably the arrival of the Crusaders who seized Jerusalem, the second holiest city of Islam, in 1099. That defeat traumatized the Muslim community. In 1187, Saladin, who became a paragon of chivalry in the West, recaptured Jerusalem from the Crusaders and, in Muslim eyes, restored the honour of Islam. The Ayyubid dynasty started a long tradition of enlisting into its armies great numbers of Turkic military slaves from Dasht-i Qipchāq. The Ayyubids had ample opportunity to acquire them as slaves, as children were sold at a very low price.<sup>1</sup> These slaves were then enlisted into the personal guards of the Ayyubid rulers. After Saladin's death in 1193, his states were divided among his brother and his sons. Dissension within the Ayyubid family weakened their power and contributed to the emergence of the Mamluk sultanate and the rise to power of the future Sultan Baybars.

Acquired by a slave merchant on the Qipchāq steppes, Baybars was first purchased as a slave soldier by Amīr Rukn al-Dīn al-Bunduqdārī, then bought from him by the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Ṣālīḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, who made him a member of his personal guard. Baybars gained the sultanate himself in 1260. This remarkable fate feat had a great impact, and Baybars subsequently became a hero of Arabic popular literature.

### Baybars' Path to Power

The Bahriyya Mamluks supplanted the Ayyubids in Egypt and in Bilād al-Shām thanks to two major military crises in which Baybars played a leading role.

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1 Reuven Amitai, "The Mamlūk Institution, or One Thousand Years of Military Slavery in the Islamic World," in *Arming Slaves. From Classical Times to the Modern Age*, eds. Ch. L. Brown and Ph. D. Morgan (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2006), 55.

His first deed of arms took place during the Egyptian crusade of Louis IX in 1249–1250. Baybars commanded the Ayyubid army alongside his master on the battlefield of Manṣūra in Egypt in 1250, where the Muslim troops were victorious although the Ayyubid sultan died “a martyr.” The dead sultan’s son, al-Malik al-Mu‘azzam Tūrān-Shāh, then ascended the Egyptian throne. But, with the murder of Tūrān-Shāh, his master’s legitimate successor, Baybars put an end to the Ayyubid dynasty in Egypt.<sup>2</sup>

A decade later, Bilād al-Shām was in turn attacked, but this time by invaders from the east led by Hülegü. The Mongol troops penetrated as far as Palestine, where their advance was halted. Once again, Baybars stood out for his feats of arms at the side of the sultan al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz during the victory of the Mamluk troops over the Mongols at ‘Ayn Jālūt. Hülegü had been obliged to return to Mongolia following the death of the Great Khan Möngke in August 1259, leaving Kitbugha in the region to command a military detachment of only a few thousand horsemen. They were crushed without much difficulty by the Mamluk troops, who numbered 120,000.<sup>3</sup> Then, after the victory of ‘Ayn Jālūt, the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Muẓaffar Quṭuz was in turn assassinated. The affair is reported as follows by Ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir’s secretary and official biographer of Baybars: “The sultan [Baybars] went to the hunt with him [Quṭuz] [. . .] then he struck him with his sword. His death was the accomplishment of God’s decree (*qadar*).”<sup>4</sup> As we may observe, this regicide posed a problem for Baybars; his biographer invokes a divine decree to justify it.

On becoming sultan, Baybars took the regnal name al-Malik al-Ẓāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars Ibn ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥī al-Bunduqdārī. Two important elements of this name ask for attention. The first is “Ibn ‘Abd Allāh” (son of God’s slave), which constitutes a fictive lineage intended to make up for the lack of ancestry resulting from his servile origins and lack of any known family.<sup>5</sup> The second element is the *nisba* al-Ṣāliḥī, derived from the name of his former master, al-Malik al-Ṣāliḥ Najm al-Dīn Ayyūb, which he claimed in an attempt to wipe out the memory of the murder of the master’s son and successor, al-Mu‘azzam

2 Some sources assign this murder to an emirs plot, Ibn ‘Abd al-Ẓāhir and al-Maqrīzī point out Baybars directly.

3 The sources give varying estimates of the forces present, but agree that the Mongol fighters were outnumbered.

4 *Rawḍ*, 68. More again the sources are conflicting on the author of the murderer, but the most of them (*Zubdat*, 54; *Husn*, 31; *Kanz* VIII:61–62) point out Baybars.

5 On these fictitious lineages, see Jacqueline Sublet, *Le Voile du nom. Essai sur le nom propre arabe* (Paris: Presses Universitaire de France, 1991), 30.

Tūrān-Shāh. He was thus able to locate his own reign within the continuity of the Ayyubid dynasty he had ended in Egypt.

In fact, this memorable victory marked the beginning of a new chapter in Baybars' political career. But just as he was acquiring prominence on the political stage, a new ideology had appeared within the *dār al-islām*, whose demands he could not meet as a mere Mamluk. The successors of Genghis Khan asserted the claims of the "imperial good fortune" or "charismatic fortune" that Eternal Heaven had granted to the Khans of Great Khan's line. In 1269 Abaqa sent a messenger to tell Baybars: "The best thing you can do is to make peace with us [. . .]. You are a slave bought at Sīwās; how can you set yourself up against the kings of the Earth?"<sup>6</sup> Abaqa, a ruler of imperial blood with the mandate of Eternal Heaven, could not but express his scorn for a rebel of no ancestry. Baybars, having been bought as a slave, could not counter this Mongol claim of lineage in kind. Moreover, he had come to power after committing regicide twice over.

### How to Wipe Clean these Blemishes?

Baybars presented himself as protector of the true faith against the crusades and the Mongol dynasty of Iran, denounced in Bilād al-Shām as pagan and tyrannical. Like all the Mamluks, however, he had little acquaintance with Islamic culture, and was advised on these matters by a shaykh, al-Khaḍīr b. Abī Bakr al-Mihrānī, who appears as his "spiritual director." All his biographers attest that he barely ever left the sultan's side and held great sway over him. He remained his companion for fifteen years until his death in 1273. Al-Khaḍīr's hold over Baybars was assisted by his power of divination. The sultan had several *zāwīya* built for him at public expense, to widespread disapprobation. The sultan made him privy to his most secret plans, never excluded him from his councils, and took him along with him on all his military expeditions.<sup>7</sup> Baybars' spiritual director was, however, a controversial figure among his contemporaries.

6 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 121; Anne Broadbridge, "Mamluk Legitimacy and Mongols," *MSR* 5 (2001): 107.

7 Louis Pouzet, "Ḥaḍīr b. Abī Bakr al-Mihrānī (m. 7 muḥ. 676/11 juin 1277) šayḥ du sultan mamelouk Al-Malik az-Zāhir Baybars," *BEO* 30 (1978): 176. On the sources on this figure, see Peter Holt, "An Early Source on Shaykh Khaḍīr Mihrānī," *BSOAS* 46/1 (1983): 33–39. On the links between Baybars and al-Khaḍīr, see Anne-Marie Eddé, "Baybars et son double. De l'ambiguïté du souverain idéal," in *Le Bilād al-Šām face aux mondes extérieurs*, 73–86.

The shaykh had the Church of the Crucifixion in Jerusalem demolished, and killed its priest with his own hand. In Alexandria, he had similar acts of vandalism committed upon the Melkite church, which was famous as the resting place of the head of John the Baptist. He turned it into a *madrasa* which, in a play on his own name, he called “al-Khaḍrā.” In April–May 1271, returning from his victory over the Crusaders at Krak des Chevaliers, Baybars, upon the urging of the shaykh, ordered the pillaging of the great synagogue of Damascus and had the Torah and all the furnishings burned.<sup>8</sup> It may be that he was the instigator of certain acts of violence that Baybars carried out against Jewish and Christian communities and Muslim sects that were considered heretical. The Mamluk sultan thus constructed his political legitimacy on an Islamic basis. That legitimacy is echoed in the narrative historical sources, particularly his royal biographies, in his monumental epigraphy, and in the apocalyptic literature.

### *The Restoration of the Caliphate in Cairo*

Baybars’ first gesture, shortly after he came to power, was to restore the caliphate in Cairo, receiving a member of the Abbasid family who had escaped from the Baghdad massacre.<sup>9</sup> The survivor’s family tree was confirmed by the chief *qāḍī* of Cairo, and in June 1261 he was invested as caliph with the regnal name of al-Mustaṣir bi-llāh. Baybars then sent him to recapture Baghdad at the head of a small army. In November 1261, the Ilkhanid armies easily crushed the Muslim detachment in the roundabouts of Baghdad.<sup>10</sup>

The caliphate very soon came to be used as an instrument in Baybars’ hands. Berke Khan sent a delegation of Mongols to the sultan,<sup>11</sup> which arrived in Cairo on 9 November 1262. The matter under discussion was an alliance of Baybars and Berke Khan against their mutual enemy, the Ilkhans. Baybars took the opportunity to enthrone a new caliph, with the name al-Ḥākim bi-amri-llāh, a week later, in the presence of the Mongol envoys. This new caliph charged Baybars with the responsibility of protecting the Muslim territories, invited

8 Louis Pouzet, “Ḥaḍir b. Abī Bakr al-Mihrānī,” 178.

9 On the restoration of the caliphate in Cairo, see P. Thorau, *Sultan Baibars I. von Ägypten. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Vorderen Orients im 13. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1987), 131–141; and a more detailed account in Stephen Heidemann, *Das Aleppiner Kalifat (AD 1261): vom Ende des Kalifates in Bagdad über Aleppo zu den Restauration in Kairo* (Leiden: Brill, 1994). See also Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 56–62; Anne Broadbridge, “Mamluk Legitimacy and Mongols,” 96; and chapter 11.

10 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 58.

11 *Rawḍ*, 142.

him to make the pilgrimage and named him his “associate in supporting the true religion” (*qasīm fī qīyyām bi-l-ḥaqq*).<sup>12</sup> Immediately there after, the caliph was clearly a puppet regime, stripped of all power and locked up in the Cairo citadel. We can speak here of the establishment of the Abbasid “neo-caliphate” of Egypt.<sup>13</sup>

Baybars then sent a letter to Berke Khan with the Mongol delegation, accompanied by a copy of the caliph’s genealogical tree. Symbolically appropriating for himself the caliph’s illustrious Abbasid lineage, Baybars thus exhibited to the Mongol Khan of the Golden Horde, a sovereign of imperial blood, the ancestry that he personally lacked. Furthermore, the Mamluk sultan thus made himself appear in his dealings with Berke Khan as the genuine leader of the Muslim community, the *umma*. He had enthroned the caliph only to give Islamic legitimacy to his own power. The immediate and tangible result of the restoration of the caliphate in Cairo was to allow Baybars to exercise suzerainty, albeit one that was more symbolic than real, over the holy cities of Islam. He had Berke Khan’s name pronounced after his own in Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem.<sup>14</sup> Thus, while making evident his esteem for the Mongol Khan of the Golden Horde, Baybars showed that his authority extended to the holy cities of Islam, thus reasserting his claim to be leader of the Muslim community.

Baybars’ inscriptions in the Near East, with the exception of the mosque of Qārā, all publicize the relationship between the caliph and the sultan. Baybars wanted to proclaim to the Muslim community at large that he was the “restorer” of the caliphate that had been destroyed by the infidel Mongols. The first occurrence of the title “partner of the commander of faithful” (*qasīm amīr al-mu’minīn*) appears on the citadel of Damascus immediately after the investiture of the first caliph. The title “the one who orders the oath to the two caliphs”<sup>15</sup> (*muḥyī l-khilāfa al-mu’azzama*) should also be read as a reference to Baybars’ restoration of the caliphate. In Egypt, the seat of the sultan’s power, the title “associate of the caliph” appears in all the surviving inscriptions, but these are far fewer than in Syria-Palestine.

A title peculiar to Baybars, “he who ordered the oath of allegiance sworn to two caliphs” (*al-āmīr bi-bay’at al-khalīfatayn*), expresses how the sultan positioned his power in relation to the caliph’s. The first occurrence of this title is on Baybars’ great mosque in Cairo, founded after the capture of Ṣafad and his

12 *Rawḍ*, 142.

13 Reuven Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement*, 57.

14 Berke Khan’s name was first pronounced at the Friday prayer in Cairo in July 1263, when the envoys of the khan of the Golden Horde were in the Mamluk capital. See *Rawḍ*, 174.

15 The translation here is borrowed from Reuven Amitai, *Holy War and Rapprochement*, 58.



latest victory over the Crusaders on 20 July 1266.<sup>16</sup> The title indicates that the two caliphs were under an obligation to him. Before the fall of the caliphate of Baghdad, sultans were “the caliphate’s approved” (*raḍī l-khilāfa*), a title which only emphasized the close cooperation between the two powers. Baybars, a regicide usurper and former Mamluk of no ancestry, took pride in having ensured the recognition of two caliphs who had what he sorely lacked: a noble lineage. The title gave Baybars, who was Islamicized but had not himself chosen to convert, religious legitimacy in wielding power. It further expresses the supremacy of the sultan’s power compared to that of the caliph.

### *The Use of Qur’ānic Symbolism*

#### The Site of ‘Ayn Jālūt, Testament of Baybars’ Victory

In Shawwāl 659/September 1261, exactly one year after the routing of the Mongol troops, Baybars ordered *Mashhad al-naṣr* built at ‘Ayn Jālūt, the site of the encounter, to commemorate the great deeds of the Mamluks at this battle.<sup>17</sup> Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir notes:

When God had granted him victory over the Tatars at ‘Ayn Jālūt, the sultan ordered the erection of the *Mashhad al-naṣr* to make plain the importance of this gift of God and to spilled blood of the enemy. He did this furthermore, because the place was ennobled since God already had mentioned it in the story of Tālūt and Jālūt in his exalted book and the sultan acknowledge the rank of this site for which God had had this extraordinary victory in store.<sup>18</sup>

But the monument is known only from literary accounts, since no trace has come down to us.<sup>19</sup> The presence of this monument in the textual sources revealed “the expressive intent” according to Humphreys.<sup>20</sup> Indeed, though its importance was exaggerated, the victory had caused great stir in Bilād al-Shām. Going a step further, Baybars turned to his advantage the religious symbolism

16 RCEA, n° 4638.

17 Rawḍ, 91. On this site, see Michael Meinecke, *Die Mamlukische Architektur in Ägypten und Syrien*, 2 vols. (Glückstadt, 1992) II:12.

18 Rawḍ, 91.

19 On this type of monument, see Thomas Leisten, “Mashhad Al-Nasr: Monuments of War and Victory in Medieval Islamic Art,” *Muqarnas* 13 (1996): 7–26, on this monument see, 19–20.

20 See Stephen Humphreys, “The Expressive Intent of the Mamluk Architecture of Cairo. A Preliminary Essay,” *StIsI* 35 (1972): 69–119.

associated with the site of ‘Ayn Jālūt, which is mentioned by the Arab geographers as a village located between Baysān and Nablūs in Palestine. It was claimed that this was the place where David killed Goliath.<sup>21</sup>

In the Qur’ān, David and Goliath appear as Ṭālūt and Jālūt. Ṭālūt confronts Jālūt and his infidel people with a small army. At the moment of parting with his troops, Ṭālūt says: “God will try you with a river; whosoever drinks of it is not of me, and whoso tastes it not, he is of me, saving him who scoops up with hand. But they drank of it, except a few of them.”<sup>22</sup> With that small number of men, Ṭālūt gained victory. The Biblical model of this Qur’ānic account is the battle Gideon fought to deliver the Israelites from Madian and his people. Gideon had his men go down to the water’s edge, and God said to him:

There are still too many men. Bring them down to the water and I will test them for you there [ . . . ] You shall separate everyone who laps the water with his tongue as a dog laps, as well as everyone who kneels to drink. Three hundred men lapped water with their hands to their mouth. All the rest of men knelt down to drink water. With the 300 men who lapped water I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand.<sup>23</sup>

Facing an army of men “as many as the locusts,” Gideon crushed the enemy with only the three hundred men who had overcome the divine test. As a result of his resounding victory, the Midianites disappeared from history.

Baybars presents himself as a tool of God and compares himself with victorious David fighting Goliath: the structure gains the quality of official propaganda for the sultan. The site of ‘Ayn Jālūt, thus identified with a Biblical-Qur’ānic war against the pagans, placed the sultan in a line of leaders assisted by God in their struggles against impious peoples. From the beginning of his reign, Baybars presented himself as the heroic saviour who had delivered the Muslims from the danger to Islam that the infidel Mongols represented. As we will see later, this same role of saviour is to be seen in certain inscriptions that he left in Bilād al-Shām and in the Islamic apocalyptic literature.

#### The Location of Moses’ Tomb and its Qur’ānic Resonance

Baybars’ first political acts are troubling: Islamicized, he was raised as a Mamluk, freed, and then turned regicide to gain power. He later sought to erase

21 ‘Ayn Jālūt is located north-west of Mount Gilboa, 50km to the north-west of Baysān. On this site, see Bernard Lewis, “‘Ayn Djalūt,” *ET* 2 1:810–811.

22 Qur’ān 2:249.

23 Jgs 7, 4–7.

memory of these things and enhance his image as a pious Muslim through activities in the service of Islam and tokens of his personal piety. In 1269 he went to Mecca for the pilgrimage, one of the five pillars of Islam, which every Muslim who is physically able must perform once in his lifetime. He then went to Jerusalem, where he decided to found a religious complex on the site of the tomb of Moses.<sup>24</sup> Of the royal biographies of Baybars, only Ibn Shaddād gives an account of this building, in the chapter in which he cites the buildings renovated by the sultan in Noble Jerusalem (*al-Quds al-sharīf*). He writes:

And he built, over the tomb of Moses (*qabr Mūsā*) which lies near the Red Hill (*al-kathīb al-aḥmar*) [. . .], a dome and a mosque. He provided [the tomb of Moses] with an inalienable pious foundation to meet the needs of its muezzin and imam, those who lived in its vicinity and those who made pious visits to it.<sup>25</sup>

It is most surprising that Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir, who never misses an opportunity to eulogize his master’s virtues, does not report the sultan’s reasons for ordering the construction of this building, which was for him highly symbolic.<sup>26</sup>

The choice was in fact dictated by the place’s Qur’ānic resonance. It is mentioned in the Qur’ān: “And we gave Moses the Book, that haply would be guided, and We made Mary’s son, and his mother, to be a sign, and gave them refuge upon a height, where was a hollow and a spring.”<sup>27</sup> According to some commentators, the hill in question (*al-rabwa*)<sup>28</sup> is the Red Hill mentioned in the Hadith collections.<sup>29</sup> The Prophet reportedly said: “I passed close by [the

24 According to Reuven Amitai, Baybars probably took this decision when passing by the site on his way to Jerusalem, see “Some Remarks on the Inscription of Baybars at Maqam Nabi Musa,” in *Mamluks and Ottomans. Studies in Honour of Michael Winter*, eds. D.J. Wasserstein and A. Ayalon (London & New York: Routledge, 2005), 49. It may be that the instigator of the initiative was Shaykh al-Khaḍīr. I do not consider it likely that Baybars had the religious knowledge needed to appreciate the site’s Qur’ānic connection.

25 Ibn Shaddād, *Ta’rīkh al-Malik al-Zāhir*, ed. A. Hutait (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1983), 351.

26 Reuven Amitai, “Some Remarks,” 49. See other’s bibliographical elements on *Maqām Nabi Mūsā* in Josef W. Meri, *The Cult of Saints Among Muslims and Jews in Medieval Syria* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 259, n. 44.

27 Qur’ān 23:49–50.

28 On *Rabwa*, see al-Harawī, *Guide des lieux de pèlerinage*. Trans. Janine Sourdel-Thomine (Damascus: Institut français d’études arabes, 1957), 25–26. Some commentators on the Qur’ān place this hill near Ramla.

29 Yerushalmi Frenkel, “Baybars and the Sacred Geography of Bilād al-Shām: A Chapter in the Islamisation of Syria’s Landscape,” *JSAT* 25 (2001): 179. But this hill is not al-Rabwa

tomb of] Moses on the night that God made me travel close to the Red Hill. He was standing up praying in his tomb.”<sup>30</sup>

Local Islamic tradition places this hill on the road between Jerusalem and the Jordan, but left its exact location vague.<sup>31</sup> A spot not far from here, which came to be known as *Maqām Nabī Mūsā*, was designated by Baybars as the site of the tomb of Moses.<sup>32</sup> The inscription he placed there, relatively low down, is highly visible to all those who arrive at this place on pilgrimage.<sup>33</sup> The inscription makes a direct reference to Baybars’ pilgrimage: “The establishment of this tomb (*maqām*) was ordered by our Master [. . .] on his return from the pilgrimage when he went to visit Noble Jerusalem.”<sup>34</sup> In this, Baybars was informing subjects on a pious visit (*al-zīyāra*) to the tomb of Moses that he had accomplished the pilgrimage to the two holy cities of Islam. It was also important for him to locate the tomb of Moses near Jerusalem,<sup>35</sup> in a region where lay numerous Christian monasteries.<sup>36</sup> Here we see an effort to Islamize a region that still retained a marked Christian presence.

### Military Victories and a New Religious Topography

The monuments on which Baybars’ inscriptions appear are symbols commemorating his warlike feats against the Franks and Mongols. Every territory won back from the enemy was another opportunity for the sultan to establish a new

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quoted in the Qur’ān. The place where Mary and his son stand is located at Bahnasā in Egypt, see al-Harawī, 101.

- 30 On the different versions of this tradition, see Amikan Elad, “Some Aspects of the Islamic Traditions Regarding the Site of the Grave of Moses,” *JSAI* 11 (1988): 1–4.
- 31 On these traditions, see Amikan Elad, “Some Aspects of the Islamic Traditions,” 1–15.
- 32 Al-Harawī (45) places Moses’ tomb near the village of Jericho. Reuven Amitai states that his tomb lies 1.5 km south of the Jerusalem-Jericho road and 8km south-west of Jericho, see “Some Remarks,” 45. On the inscriptions carved on this tomb, see: L. Ary Mayer, “Two Inscriptions of Baybars,” *The Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine* 2 (1932): 27–32; Reuven Amitai, “Some Remarks,” 45–53.
- 33 Reuven Amitai, “Some Remarks,” 51.
- 34 *RCEA*, n° 4612.
- 35 On Jerusalem’s sacrality in early Islam, see Joseph Sadan, “A Legal Opinion of a Muslim Jurist Regarding the Sanctity of Jerusalem,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 13 (1993): 231–245.
- 36 It seems, judging from the *waqf* document of *al-Nabī Mūsā*, that most of the properties turned into pious foundations had been taken from the Latin churches and the monasteries. See Yerushalmi Frenkel, “Baybars and the Sacred Geography,” 161.

religious topography in Bilād al-Shām, Islamizing the region and “purifying” it of any traces of the infidels.<sup>37</sup>

After his first victories over the Franks, in Rajab 664/April 1266, Baybars went to Hebron to make a pilgrimage to Abraham’s tomb. The sanctuary was at that time also a place of pilgrimage for Jews and Christians. Baybars issued an edict forbidding them entry on the grounds that they would defile it with their impurity.<sup>38</sup> After the capture of Jaffa on 20 Jumādā II 666/7 March 1268, Baybars ordered mosques to be built in the region, the symbols of Islam (*aẓhār shā’ā’ir al-islām*) to be displayed, and religious proscriptions to be enforced.<sup>39</sup> Conscious of the importance of Bilād al-Shām in Muslim eyes, he stamped the mark of Islam on the region with the construction of religious buildings.

Qārā is a market town situated on the road from Ḥimṣ to Damascus, whose population was entirely Christian. The establishment of a mosque in this Christian centre is a further example of the Mamluk sultan’s campaign of purification. He ordered al-Malik al-Manṣūr, the ruler of Ḥamā, to lead a raid against the Cilician capital of Sīs. The Armenian soldiers were defeated, and the son of their king Leon was captured. Baybars at once set forth to meet the victorious troops. On the way, he massacred the Christian population of Qārā, who stood accused of having seized Muslims in order to sell them as slaves to the Franks. Baybars had all the residents leave the town and ordered his soldiers to behead them. The Mamluk army then massacred the monks of a monastery lying outside the town. Qārā was pillaged and its church converted to a mosque in Dhū l-Ḥijjā 664/September 1266. Through this ostentatious act of brutality, Baybars asserted his role as protector of his Muslim subjects, as well as making clear his determination to wipe out the region’s Christians.

The re-Islamization of the sites recaptured from the Crusaders is clearly affirmed in their monumental epigraphy. After Ṣafad was captured on 15 Shawwāl 664/20 July 1236, a long inscription was carved on the citadel. The text, preceded by two Qur’ānic citations, runs:

This citadel was restored after Baybars delivered it from the hands of the accursed Franks and placed it in the hands of the Muslims. He transferred it from the domain of the Templars to that of the believers. He brought it back to the faith, its original state. He caused a grievous loss and sor-

37 On the sacrality of Bilād al-Shām, see Paul Cobb, “Virtual Sacrality: Making Muslim Syria Sacred Before the Crusades,” *Medieval Encounters* 8/1 (2002), 35–55; and Yerushalmi Frenkel, “Baybars and the Sacred Geography.”

38 *Rawḍ*, 250–251.

39 *Rawḍ*, 293.

row to the infidels. Thanks to his efforts, he replaced impiety (*al-kufr*) with the true faith (*al-imān*), the sound of bells (*al-nāqūs*) with the call to prayer (*al-adhān*), and the Gospel with the Qurʾān [. . .].<sup>40</sup>

The citations that appear before the text serve as a religious justification for the battles to capture the citadel.<sup>41</sup> The Mamluk soldiers were made victorious because they were true believers, and paradise is their lot. The Franks, by antinomy, are represented as infidels. The content of the inscription is equally unequivocal as to Baybars' desire to eradicate Western Christianity from Syria. As soon as it was recaptured, the citadel was transformed into a Muslim stronghold.

Baybars also sought to link himself symbolically to the great figures who had carried Islam out of the Arabian peninsula. In Ḥimṣ, he had a mausoleum built over the tomb of Khālīd b. al-Walīd, the "sword of God" (*sayf Allāh*).<sup>42</sup> According to Islamic tradition, Khālīd b. al-Walīd had fought the Prophet at Uḥud, but then converted to Islam and took part in the conquest of Mecca. He is considered one of the conquerors of Syria, where he fought under Abū 'Ubayda' b. al-Jarrāh's command. Baybars also had a dome built over Abū 'Ubayda's tomb, which lies on the east bank of the Jordan.<sup>43</sup> These two Arab generals of the early centuries were particularly suitable choices for presenting Baybars as the new warrior of the faith in Syria.

The titles of "annihilator of Franks, Armenians and Tatars [Mongols]" (*mubīd al-faranj wa-l-arman wa-l-tatār*) and "conqueror of the cities and fortresses" (*fātiḥ al-ḥuṣūn wa-l-qilā' wa-l-amṣār*) are first applied to Baybars in the mausoleum of Khālīd b. al-Walīd. A further inscription concerns the victories won by the Mamluk forces in Cilicia. Baybars had not himself participated in these battles, which probably explains the somewhat imprecise phraseology of the inscription: "The building [of the cupola], over the tomb of Sayf Allāh, the Companion of the Prophet, Khālīd b. al-Walīd [. . .] was ordered by our Master [. . .] when he passed through Ḥimṣ to the war in the land of Sīs."<sup>44</sup> Baybars, anxious not to lose the prestige of the victory, ties the embellishment of the valorous warrior's tomb to the Mamluk troops' victorious campaign in Cilicia.

40 RCEA, n° 4589.

41 Qurʾān 58:22; and 21:105.

42 The identification of this mausoleum to that of Khālīd b. al-Walīd is not affirmed by medieval authors, see Nikita Elisséeff, "Ḥimṣ," *EI*<sup>2</sup> III:414.

43 RCEA, n° 4714; Ibn Shaddād, *Ta'riḥ al-Malik al-Zāhir*, 351.

44 RCEA, n° 4557.

The titles that Baybars is given in the Ḥims̄ inscriptions also reflect his recent victories over some Muslim communities. He is called the “vanquisher of the revolts and rebellions” (*qāhir al-khawārij wa-l-mutamarridīn*). The term *qāhir* is one of the *sifāt Allāh* or attributes of God.<sup>45</sup> At this time, Baybars had been taking his first steps against the Ismāʿīli whom he had accused of paying tribute to the Franks. The sultan is the “killer of the infidels and heretics” (*qātil al-kafara wa-l-mushrikīn*). This title, carved in the mausoleum of Khālid b. al-Walīd, was first used by Nūr al-Dīn in Ḥamā, thus linking Baybars to a long line of illustrious warriors of Islam in Syria.

Another inscription, also on Khālid b. al-Walīd’s mausoleum in Ḥims̄, mentions the establishment of a *waqf* over the lands recaptured from the Franks to the benefit of the warriors of the faith:

The village of Fa‘am, in the land of Ṣafad, was conquered by his noble sword in Shawwāl 664/July 1266 [. . .]. He established it in its entirety as a *waqf* [. . .]. He said: since God has favoured me by permitting to conquer citadels and forts from the hands of the infidel band of the Franks, taking them with their arable lands and prosperous regions [. . .]. I have divided the land among the champions of the faith, among those pious and holy men who took part in these conquests, and I have done likewise for the tombs of the prophets and upright men which surround these conquered lands.<sup>46</sup>

Baybars thus establishes a real sacred topography, inalienably assigning lands recaptured from the Franks to the mausoleums of holy warriors.

All these monuments that Baybars built or restored are linked to a victory over the “infidels,” to Biblical-Qurʾānic figures or to companions of the Prophet. Their re-Islamization presents the Sultan as a pious Muslim. Baybars’ association with these sites, now linked to champions of Islam, gives him a fictive *nasab* and thereby a place in a lineage, since his biological lineage is lacking. In addition, the sultan gives his actions an Islamic legitimacy in order to justify a throne won at the cost of two regicides.

45 See Daniel Gimaret, *Les noms divins dans l’islam. Exgèse lexicographique et théologique* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1988), 241–242.

46 RCEA, n° 4593.

### Baybars, The New Alexander

In three inscriptions, Baybars is styled the “Alexander of [his] time” (*Iskandar al-zamān*) and “Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction” (*ṣāhib al-qirān*).<sup>47</sup> Baybars was the first Mamluk ruler to adopt these titles. He did so exclusively in Syria-Palestine, and confined its use to the inscriptions carved on three religious monuments there: at Qārā, on the church that he had turned into a mosque in September 1266, after putting the town’s Christian population to the sword; on the mausoleum of Khālīd b. al-Walīd<sup>48</sup> in Ḥimṣ, also in September 1266; and finally on the tomb of Moses, the building of which he ordered, as we have seen, in 1269 on his return from the pilgrimage to Mecca. Baybars attached great symbolic importance to these religious foundations.

In the inscription graved on Maqām Nabī Mūsā, Baybars is the “annihilator of Franks and Tatars” (*mubīd al-Faranj wa-l-Tatār*).<sup>49</sup> It begins with a Qur’ānic citation: “Only he shall inhabit God’s places of worship who believes in God and the Last Day.”<sup>50</sup> The choice of this quote is symbolic. It follows a verse that forbids for the associationists (i.e., unbelievers, Jews and Christians) to enter in the mosques: “It is not for the idolaters to inhabit God’s place of worship, witnessing against themselves unbelief.”<sup>51</sup>

In Islam, the exegetes identify Alexander with “the man with two horns” or the “Two-horned One” of the Qur’ān, the Dhūl-Qarnayn of *sura* 18 (83–97). A great number of Jewish and Christian traditions were incorporated in the Qur’ān. Ibn Kathīr explains, in his commentary of this *sura*, according to a Prophetic hadith, that a Jewish asks Muḥammad for identity of Dhū l-Qarnayn. The Prophet said he was a young man from Bilād Rūm, and he had built Alexandria. An angel took him to a barrier (*al-sadd*) where he saw people with dog’s face.<sup>52</sup> It is here an allusion to the *Alexander Romance*.

The Qur’ānic man with two horns is considered by the exegetes to have been a believer (*muslim*). He foretold God’s punishments upon the wicked and his rewards for the good. He went from one end of the Earth, where the sun sets,

47 RCEA n° 4554, 4557 and 4612.

48 The latter is considered by Islamic tradition to have been one of the conquerors of Syria-Palestine. For Baybars, restoring his mausoleum allowed him to present himself as part of the line of valorous men who had brought glory of to Islam in its early years in the region.

49 RCEA n° 4612.

50 Qur’ān 9:18.

51 Qur’ān 9:17.

52 Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr* v:189.



to the other where it rises, and then reached a place situated between “two barriers” (*bayn al-saddatayn*).<sup>53</sup> There he found a people that understood no language, in other words a savage people, known as Yājūj and Mājūj. God charged him with the mission of building between these two tall mountains a gigantic wall, made of steel and iron, to prevent these savage peoples from “doing corruption in the Earth.”<sup>54</sup> Here we have the Qur’ānic version of Gog and Magog, the peoples of Biblical eschatology.<sup>55</sup>

The episode that recounts the exploits of Dhū l-Qarnayn is preceded in the same *sura* (18:59–81) by the story of the journey of Moses and his servant (*fatā*) in search of the “meeting of the two seas” (*majma‘a al-baḥrayn*).<sup>56</sup> Most of the commentators of Islam’s holy book refer to Moses’ companion by the name al-Khaḍir, and associate the journey of Moses and his companion with Alexander’s journey in search of the source of life.<sup>57</sup> Making Baybars a “New Alexander” therefore implied making his faithful spiritual director a “New al-Khaḍir.”<sup>58</sup> It is possible that the latter was the inspiration for these inscriptions that glorified him as much as they did Baybars.<sup>59</sup>

In Baybars’ inscriptions, the reference to Alexander refers to the “Two-horned One” of the Qur’ān. The eschatological dimension of Yājūj and Mājūj is directly linked to their being shut up behind the barrier that Alexander built. The bursting forth of the Mongols had led to eschatological worries in the Muslim empire. The peoples of Yājūj and Mājūj clearly represent the nomads of Inner Asia. The identification of the Turks, and later the Mongols, with Yājūj and Mājūj rests on a historical foundation: the peoples mentioned in Ezekiel, the description of whom appears to be an echo of the Cimmerian’s invasion of Anatolia at the end of the eighth century BC. The arrival, on God’s order, of these peoples of the Biblical and Qur’ānic eschatology could be seen as foretelling the end of time. In this context, Baybars appears as the New Alexander of the Qur’ān, having halted the Mongol surge into Bilād al-Shām. The Mamluk sultan did not, however, see fit to have this title carved on a fortress or on

53 Qur’ān 18:93.

54 Qur’ān 18:94.

55 Ez 38–9; Rv 20:7–10.

56 Qur’ān 18:60.

57 On al-Khaḍir in the Qur’ān and exegetic traditions, see Arent J. Wensinck, “Al-Khaḍir,” *ET*<sup>2</sup> IV:935–937.

58 For the Sufis, al-Khiḍr (al-Khaḍir) is the model of spiritual guidance, see Hugh Talat Halman, *Where the Two Seas Meet. The Qur’ānic Story of al-Khiḍr and Moses in Sufi Commentaries as a Model of Spiritual Guidance* (Louisville: Fons Vitae, 2013).

59 See Anne-Marie Eddé, “Baybars et son double,” 73–86.

the citadel of Damascus.<sup>60</sup> He probably wished to reserve the eschatological impact of the figure of Alexander for the three religious monuments he founded after his victories over the enemies of Islam and his completion of the pilgrimage to the two holy cities, Mecca and Jerusalem.

### Baybars as the 'Last Emperor' in the Apocalyptic Literature

#### *The Treatise of Ibn al-Nafīs*

Baybars' eschatological role as "Alexander of [his] age," taken up by him in his inscriptions, is also to be found in the Islamic apocalyptic literature. 'Alā' al-Dīn Ibn al-Nafīs (1210–88), an Egyptian scholar who was probably the sultan's physician, is the author of a treatise entitled *al-Kāmil's Epistle on the Life of the Prophet*,<sup>61</sup> in which a hero who prophesies the calamities that the Islamic community will have to endure for its sins is a certain al-Kāmil. This text includes historical information on Baybars' reign and his character and physical features.<sup>62</sup> Ibn al-Nafīs' treatise, describing historical events in a tragic mode, was undoubtedly influenced by Christian apocalyptic literature, as we see in his description of the deterioration of religious life, the threats of destruction from outside and the eschatological events that are to precede the end of time. Also appearing prominently is the theme of the "last emperor," the victorious sovereign who must save the religious community. It is well known that many of the elements found in the historical Christian apocalypses—which circulated, not only as written *corpus*, but also orally through the motifs used in sermons—were incorporated into the Islamic *corpus*.<sup>63</sup> The concept of the last emperor was widespread in Coptic circles, that is, among Christians in Egypt.

60 The title was adopted by al-Malik al-Ashraf Khalīl in an inscription on the citadel of Alep, see François de Polignac, "Un nouvel Alexandre mamelouk, al-Malik al-Ashraf Khalīl et le regain eschatologique au XIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Figures mythiques des mondes musulmans*, 73–87.

61 The text edited by Meyerhof and Schacht is accompanied by a greatly abridged English translation, *Theologus autodidactus of Ibn Nafīs (al-Risāla al-kāmilīyya fī sirat al-nabawīyya)*, eds. M. Meyerhof and J. Schacht (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968). See Ibn al-Nafīs' biography, 10–22. The *Risālat al-kāmilīyya fī sirat al-nabawīyya* must have been written before 1274, the date of the oldest preserved manuscript, see Remke Kruk, "History and Apocalypse: Ibn al-Nafīs's Justification of Mamluk Rule?" *Der Islam* 72/2 (1995): 324, n. 5.

62 Ibn al-Nafīs, 41–48.

63 Armand Abel, "Changements politiques et littérature apocalyptique dans le monde musulman," *StIsI* 2 (1954): 37. See a survey of Christian apocalyptic literature in Georg

The origin of the eschatological last emperor is to be found in the Apocalypse of the Pseudo-Methodius, a work composed in the seventh century in the context of the Arab invasions of Syria-Palestine.<sup>64</sup> Elements of this text were undoubtedly circulating in Arabic at the time Ibn al-Nafis composed his treatise, in the second half of the thirteenth century.<sup>65</sup> A detailed examination of Graf's description of the Christian apocalyptic texts of the Islamic period shows that they present many similarities to this treatise of Ibn al-Nafis.<sup>66</sup>

In these texts, we generally find the theme of the last emperor charged by God with cleansing the religious community of its sins. In his derivative work, Ibn al-Nafis closely follows this pattern, presenting a summary of historical events first, then describing the deterioration of religious life. The Prophet of Islam, for example, encouraged marriage for the sake of producing numerous descendants. But Ibn al-Nafis observes that at the time he is composing his text there is a proliferation of sins: homosexuality (*al-liwāt*), fornication (*al-zinā*), etc.<sup>67</sup> Here we find this type of literature being used for ascetic purposes. As in every apocalyptic text, whether Islamic or Christian, he evokes the destruction of the Muslim community by an external threat, in this case the Mongols, although they are not mentioned by name. Ibn al-Nafis writes: "The infidels (*al-kuffār*) cannot belong to any religious community (*dhū milla*) because their success would be considered the success of their religion."<sup>68</sup> They "live in an inhabited world" very far from the temperate zone. They must come from northern climes (*min al-aṭrāf al-shamāliyya*), because the peoples of those regions are courageous and "hard-hearted."<sup>69</sup> Al-Kāmil, the hero of Ibn al-Nafis' treatise, prophesies that the infidels will not be able to seize all the Muslim lands because, were that to happen, the immediate consequence would be the

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Graf, *Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1944) 1:273–297.

- 64 In the Middle Ages, the theme of the last emperor came to be replaced in the religious climate created by the Muslim capture of Edessa in 1144. The subsequent period was marked by the growing importance of the ideal of poverty preached by the Franciscans and by the apocalyptic theories of Joachim of Fiore (ca. 1132–1202). See, Marjorie Reeves, "Joachimist Influences on the Idea of a Last World Emperor," *Traditio* 17 (1961): 323–370; Randolph Daniel, "A Re-Examination of the Origins of Franciscan Joachimism," *Speculum* 43 (1968): 671–676; "Apocalyptic Conversion: the Joachite Alternative to the Crusades," *Traditio* 25 (1969): 127–154.
- 65 Remke Kruk, "History and Apocalypse," 329.
- 66 Georg Graf, *Geschichte*, 329.
- 67 Ibn al-Nafis, 34.
- 68 Ibn al-Nafis, 41.
- 69 Ibn al-Nafis, 42.

destruction of Islam. The infidels would occupy only the regions where the aforementioned sins were numerous, in other words Syria-Palestine.<sup>70</sup>

Without naming him, Ibn al-Nafis presents Baybars as the victorious sovereign, predestined by God to save the Muslim community. As the latter had not respected the instructions of God's messenger (*rasūl Allāh*), divine punishment appeared in the form of the infidel attacks. The purpose of the text is to exhort the population of Syria-Palestine to accept the power of Sultan Baybars. The religious community, according to Ibn al-Nafis, can only be saved if two essential conditions are fulfilled: the sultan must have a numerous army (*jaysh kathīr*) and he must be courageous.<sup>71</sup> The victorious sultan must be cruel and merciless.<sup>72</sup> Before combating the infidels (*qabl mujāwzat al-kuffār*), he must seize the property of the country's inhabitants (*amwāl ahl al-bilād*). This is presented by Ibn al-Nafis as an inescapable necessity for the well-being of the Muslim community which will thus be cleansed of its sins.<sup>73</sup>

The population will then fall into a state of extreme poverty leading to an increase in murder and other crimes in the country.<sup>74</sup> The victorious sultan must then order exemplary punishments (*al-'uqūbāt*): cutting off members (*qaṭa'a al-atrāf*), crucifying (*al-ṣalb*), nailing (*al-tasmīr*).<sup>75</sup> This, Ibn al-Nafis emphasizes, is why the sultan must, like the infidels, come from the North or "from a region near to them" (*min arḍ taghrīb min-hum*).<sup>76</sup> Baybars, being of Turkic origin, was thus harsh enough to carry out this mission of salvation. And he did indeed have character traits similar to those of the Mongols. The treatise thus constructs the sultan's legitimacy in contrast to the ideal sovereign described in his royal biographies and inscriptions, but assigns to him a role whose eschatological import is in line with the meaning of the title *Iskandar al-zamān* in his monumental epigraphy.

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70 Ibn al-Nafis, 43.

71 Ibn al-Nafis, 45.

72 Ibn al-Nafis, 44.

73 Ibn al-Nafis, 44. Several years before the capture of Baghdad, the arrival of the Mongols at the gates of Europe in 1241 had also rekindled eschatological expectations. In a letter addressed to the king of England by Emperor Frederick II, preserved in Matthew Paris's *Chronica Majora*, the Mongols are presented as God's instruments charged with "purifying" the Christians of their sins. See Matthew Paris IV:112.

74 Ibn al-Nafis, 44.

75 Ibn al-Nafis, 45.

76 Ibn al-Nafis, 45.

*Apocalyptic Literature and the Eschatological Role of the  
Turks and Mongols*

Historically minded Islamic apocalyptic literature was abundant at the time of the Arab invasion of Christian territories in the early years of Islam,<sup>77</sup> and later at the time of the Byzantine recapture of some territories that had come under Islamic rule.<sup>78</sup> Another cycle of historical apocalypses is linked to the Turkic intrusion into the Muslim world,<sup>79</sup> an intrusion for which the Abbasid caliphs were blamed as they had introduced them into the Muslim empire as slaves in their armies.<sup>80</sup> In his study of Islamic apocalyptic literature, David Cook does not refer to any such text of the Mamluk period or to Ibn al-Nafis' treatise in particular. But the arrival of the Mongols in Islamic territories was often presented in an apocalyptic perspective by Muslim authors. Although the example chosen here does not directly concern Baybars' legitimacy, it would be of interest to compare a textual fragment—taken from the work of a Mamluk author—with the treatise of Ibn al-Nafis. The two writers, although differing in their approach, both adopt religious criteria to explain the surge of the infidel Mongols across the Islamic empire.

Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī compiled an encyclopaedia covering the entire range of knowledge that a man of his age was expected to gain. A part of his *Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab*, composed between 1314 and 1330, deals with the Mongols. Of particular interest to us here, is the episode concerning the rise to power of Genghis Khan.<sup>81</sup> Al-Nuwayrī begins his account of the future Great Khan's origins by reporting that he was said to have led the life of an ascetic (*tazāhhada*) for a long time and to have withdrawn to the mountains. The reason for [this behaviour] was his conversation with a certain Jew whom he asked why Moses, Jesus and Muḥammad had attained such a lofty position. The Jew replied that they had dedicated themselves to God and that He had granted them that dignity in reward for their love for Him. Genghis Khan then asked him, "If I love God and dedicate myself to Him, will

77 David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 2002), 34–66.

78 David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 66–84.

79 David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 84–91.

80 David Cook, *Studies in Muslim Apocalyptic*, 84.

81 Somewhat divergent interpretations of this passage have been the subject of two publications, see Reuven Amitai, "Al-Nuwayrī as a Historien of the Mongols," in *The Historiography of Islamic Egypt (c. 950–1800)*, ed. H. Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 23–36; Armstrong Lyall, "The Making of a Sufi: al-Nuwayrī's Account of the Origin of Genghis Khan," *MSR* 10/2 (2006): 153–160. The intent here is not to discuss the arguments of those authors, but to show that al-Nuwayrī's description of the Mongols' arrival in the Islamic world was explained in ways very similar to that of Ibn al-Nafis.

He give me such a position?" The Jew replied, "Yes, and I can tell you that, in our books, it is written that a dynasty will be descended from you."<sup>82</sup> Genghis Khan at once gave up his blacksmith's trade, left his people and withdrew to the mountain, where he ate only permitted foods (*al-mubāḥāt*), that is, those allowed by Islam. When people came to visit him, he refused to speak to them, but indicated they should clap their hands and say, "O God, O God" (*yā Allāh, yā Allāh*).<sup>83</sup> Genghis Khan would then start dancing. This amounts could be a description of a rite of *dhikr* and a *samā'*.

This story reflects a monotheistic context, because the role of the Jew as a sign of Genghis Khan's greatness. As Michal Biran points out, this account brings to mind the role of the Jews and the Jewish scriptures as harbinger of Muhammad's prophecy (and Jesus' before him). Genghis Khan's religious behaviour as displayed in this episode reflects a sort of Mongol "Hanafism," blended with his shamanistic role.<sup>84</sup> He implicitly identifies himself as on a par with the great Muslim prophets. Al-Nuwayrī's purpose is to present the future conqueror of the Muslim territories in the guise of an ascetic who aspires to God, despite his un-Islamic heritage. In doing so, the Mamluk historian, like Ibn al-Nafīs, puts forward a divine justification for Genghis Khan's success. God has rewarded Genghis Khan's love and devotion for Him, as he did for the three prophets of monotheism, by granting victories to him and to his descendants. Armstrong Lyall considers that al-Nuwayrī projects the image of a fourteenth-century Sufi onto the figure of Genghis Khan.<sup>85</sup> I am more inclined to think that the Mamluk historian gives a description of the origins of the future Mongol Great Khan in the same perspective as Ibn al-Nafīs, as a scourge of God, without considering him to be the eschatological last emperor. But in presenting Genghis Khan as a figure who knows of the prophets of the three monotheistic religions, and who, while not belonging to any religion, seeks God and withdraws from the world, he turns him into a "proto-Muslim" who becomes the instrument of divine decree. Al-Nuwayrī thus gives, *a posteriori*, a divine justification for the abolition of the Abbasid caliphate and the various Ilkhanid invasions of Bilād al-Shām. This short account in fact amounts to an apocalyptic text whose objectives are consistent with those of Ibn al-Nafīs.

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82 *Nihāyat* XXVII:207.

83 *Nihāyat* XXVII:207.

84 Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 120.

85 Armstrong Lyall, "The Making of a Sufi," 154.

### *Baybars versus Hülegü*

Finally, I shall to analyse a Christian apocalyptic text, composed in Karshuni, which can be read in comparison to Ibn al-Nafis' text. It is a *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* concerning the Mongol invasions, addressed to the apostle Peter.<sup>86</sup> This particular genre of texts appeared in Syriac in response to challenges that were of both religious and political character. The authors of *Testaments* kept their community's faith alive through the authority of Christ and his apostles in times that were—due to particular historical circumstances—troubled ones for Christian communities.<sup>87</sup>

The historical data in this *Testament* includes the arrival of the Mongols in the Muslim empire, the successors of Hülegü (with a reference to Ghazan Khan's conversion), Baybars' seizure of power, and the description of his successors' reigns. We can judge from this that it cannot have been composed before the early fourteenth century. The content of this apocalypse is quite different from that of Ibn al-Nafis' text: the author gives a Christian view of the Mongol invasions. This *Testament* is notable for its strong historic character; indeed, it is that rare creature, a genuine historical apocalypse. It gives the names of people and places, an unusual occurrence in this type of literature whose content is of a symbolic nature and which, to be understood, must be interpreted in the light of Biblical texts. As we have seen, Ibn al-Nafis does not mention Baybars by name, though the contemporary reader of his text would understand that he is indeed the person foretold by al-Kāmil as the eschatological last emperor. A true counterpart to the Epistle of Ibn al-Nafis, the *Testament* takes this one step further:

Know, Peter, that scourges and terrors will fall upon my people from the sons of Ismā'īl (*banū Ismā'īl*) [...]. Then I warn you, Peter, that in that time there will rise up against them [the Muslims of Syria-Palestine] sultans that will be called al-Zawāhir. These sons of slaves will sit on golden seats and the sons of free men will stand about their heads, like slaves.<sup>88</sup>

86 Description of this text in Georg Graf, *Geschichte* 1:292. It has been published in Arabic alphabet by Joseph Ziadé, "Un testament de N.-S concernant les invasions des Mongols," *Revue de l'Orient chrétien* 1/21 (1918–1919): 261–273; 433–444.

87 On the various "Testaments of Our Lord Jesus Christ" during the first four centuries of Islam, see Muriel Debié, "Les apocalypses apocryphes syriaques: des textes pseudépigraphiques de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament," in *Les Apocryphes syriaques*, eds. M. Debié, A. Desreumaux, Ch. Jullien and F. Jullien (Paris: Geuthner, 2005), 111–146.

88 *Testament*, 262.

This is a direct reference to the emergence of the Mamluk state, which as we have seen arose from a military caste whose origins lay outside Syria-Palestine. The author of the *Testament* was greatly influenced by memory of the reign of Baybars (whose name, as we shall see below, is explicitly mentioned in the text). He refers to the Mamluk sultans as al-*Zawāhir*, a distortion of al-Malik al-*Zāhir*, Baybars' honorific title. "From being slaves, they will become sultans who know neither father nor mother," writes the author of the *Testament*, emphasizing Baybars' want of lineage.<sup>89</sup> We then find the theme of the deterioration of religious life in the Muslim community, which justified the Mamluk seizure of power: "At that time, sin multiplied, as did fornication (*al-zinā*) and false witnesses (*al-shahādāt al-zūr*)."<sup>90</sup> The description of Hülegü's arrival in the Muslim empire is consistent with historical fact: "I warn you again, Peter, that a powerful and impious king (*malik qawī kāfir*) whose name is Hulawūn will come out of the East."<sup>91</sup> Hülegü is, to a certain extent, presented as an eschatological last emperor, but this time one sent by God to save the Christian community from the ignominies that the sons of Ismā'īl are inflicting on it. Hülegü spills the blood of the Muslims, seizes Baghdad, thereby destroying the Abbasid caliphate, and takes Aleppo; his great emir Kitbugha, whose name is also cited, reaches Damascus; he pushes on as far as the Holy Land, and then stops at a spring (ʿAyn-mā).<sup>92</sup> One notes that the author of the *Testament*, who presents the Mongols as agents of divine providence come to deliver the Christian communities from the Islamic yoke, makes no mention of Baybars' defeat of the Mongols at ʿAyn Jālūt.

This apocalyptic text recalls Baybars' regicide: "Quṭuz, who defeated Kitbugha, was killed by the emirs, his relatives."<sup>93</sup> The author of the *Testament* constructs the figure of Baybars as the inverse of Hülegü. He writes that:

This Turk, Bibars, who will seize power, will be bad [for the Christians]. He will take your own city, Antioch, Peter, [. . .], he will reduce the churches to ruin and massacre the priests and monks.<sup>94</sup>

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89 *Testament*, 262.

90 *Testament*, 262.

91 *Testament*, 262.

92 ʿAyn-mā for ʿAyn Jālūt.

93 *Testament*, 263.

94 *Testament*, 263.



The description of events in *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ* is entirely at one with the accounts of Baybars' actions given by the Islamic sources; this apocalyptic text may, in fact, be considered, to some extent, a historical account. The author describes events from a Christian perspective and emphasizes as did Ibn al-Nafis, the harshness of Baybars' reign for the Christian and Muslim populations. It must therefore be read in contrast to the Mamluk sultan's royal historiography, to the eschatological dimension given to his reign by the title *Iskandar al-zamān* in his monumental epigraphy, and to his role as last emperor in Ibn al-Nafis' treatise. While he refrains from placing too much emphasis on Hülegü's providential role, the author of the *Testament*, a Syriac Christian, does not stress the violence of the Mongol conquests. He conveys the positive view that the Christians took of the infidel Mongol rule of Muslim lands.

The expectation of a saviour figure was latent in iconography as well as in the textual tradition. In two Syriac *evangeliarum*, Hülegü and Doquz Khatun are depicted with the characteristics of Constantine and Helen in the traditional description of the feast of the Cross.<sup>95</sup> An Armenian Gospel copied and illuminated by Toros Roslin at Hromkla in 1260, and held in the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, includes a magnificent Adoration of the Magi. The Catholicos appears to have gone to meet Hülegü in 1259, while the latter was crossing the Euphrates on his way to Syria-Palestine. The illuminator mentions the Ilkhan's name and the capture of Aleppo. Above the three Magi are depicted five figures wearing Mongol headdress, under a legend reading: "The Mongol Tatar arrived today." One of the five, whose headdress is different from the others', is pointing towards an inscription that says: "The Magi came from the East." Claude Mutafian points out that this may represent Hülegü himself, who would thus be identified with one of the Magi.<sup>96</sup> According to Otto of Freising, Prester John was a descendant of the Magi. Armenians used the Western legend based on the Gospel Story of the Adoration of Magi, who later

95 The first is preserved at British Library (Add. 7170, fol. 2441r), and the second at the Vatican Library (Syriac manuscript n° 559, fol. 223v), see a description of these manuscripts by Jules Leroy, *Les manuscrits syriaques à peintures conservés dans les bibliothèques d'Europe et d'Orient. Contribution à l'étude de l'iconographie des églises de langue syriaque* (Paris: Institut Français d'Archéologie de Beyrouth LXXXVII, 1964), 280–313. On the dating of this manuscript, see Jean-Marie Fiey, "Iconographie syriaque, Hulegu, Doquz Khatun . . . et six ambons?" *Le Muséon* 88 (1975): 59–64.

96 Claude Mutafian, "Les manuscrits de Toros," *Azad magazine* 130 (2010): 24, see fig. 8, fol. 15v of Ms 251 of Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. I thank Claude Mutafian for his permission to reproduce this illustration.

converted the peoples of the East, and they even constructed a legend that some Mongols were descendants of the Magi.<sup>97</sup>

Comparison of this group of sources yields a vast amount of information on the process of legitimization deployed in Baybars' favour, and also on the Muslims and Christian perceptions of the Mongol invasions in the innermost heart of the Islamic empire. From the time he seized power, Baybars sought to make up for his lack of lineage by incorporating himself into a symbolic line of fighters for the faith who had been assisted by God; this is attested by the Mashhad al-naṣr that he would erect at 'Ayn Jālūt to commemorate his resounding victory over the Mongol troops. He also sought to use the same opportunity to erase the memory of sultan Qutuz's murder by claiming the victory as his own on the monument. The regicide of his former master's natural heir was another memory that Baybars sought to purge, here claiming Ayyubid legitimacy by keeping in his inscriptions the *nisba* al-Ṣāliḥi that linked him to the Ayyubid sultan.

The propagandists of the sultan, seeking Islamic legitimacy, emphasized his image as the ideal Muslim sovereign. He is presented in the narrative sources and in his monumental epigraphy as a holy warrior (*al-mujāhid*), aided by God in his military victories (*al-mu'ayyad*), and as a just (*al-ʿādil*) and pious sovereign. This image conforms to that of the ideal sovereign of the Mirror for Princes. Ibn al-Nafīs, whose concern is to justify the harshness of Baybars' rule towards the Muslim populations of Syria-Palestine, makes the sultan the eschatological last emperor. He has saved the Muslim community by cleansing it of its sins, but also by delivering it from the Mongol danger in the region. In the *Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ*, for the Christians the roles here were reversed in favour of Hülegü. After the fall of Baghdad, the latter soon came to be seen as the "New Constantine" who was thus "counterposed" to the figure of Baybars as the eschatological "New Alexander."

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97 Alexander Osipian, "Baptised Mongol Rulers, Prester John and the Magi," 166.

## The Written and the Spoken Word. Baybars and the Caliphal Investiture Ceremonies in Cairo

Baybars restored the Abbasid Caliphate by establishing two survivors of the massacre of the reigning family in Cairo. The first time he appointed a caliph, al-Amīr Abū l-Qāsim in Rajab 659/June 1261,<sup>1</sup> the move was intended to strengthen the legitimization of his power in the domestic sphere. Abū l-Qāsim officially invested Baybars as Mamluk sultan. Not long afterwards, Baybars sent the unfortunate caliph to a certain death, dispatching him to recapture Baghdad at the head of an army of three hundred horsemen. The force was wiped out near the former Abbasid capital in Dhū l-Qa‘da 659/October 1261.<sup>2</sup> According to al-Maqrīzī, someone from Mawṣil had warned Baybars: “As soon as the caliph feels he is master of Baghdad [. . .], he will deprive you of your sovereignty over Egypt.”<sup>3</sup> Shāfi‘ b. ‘Alī, for his part, wondered how, since Iraq had been conquered by an enemy so strong and so numerous, Baybars could have sent such a small force (*shirdhimat al-qalīla*) with the caliph.<sup>4</sup> A year after the death of Abū l-Qāsim, Baybars had al-Amīr Abū l-‘Abbās appointed on 2 Muḥarram 661/16 November 1262. The ceremonies for the inauguration of this second caliph were very different. On this occasion, Baybars wished to gain external legitimacy for the Mamluk sultanate. Shortly afterwards, he

1 Abū l-‘Abbās, the first of the two pretenders to the caliphate, arrived in Syria under the protection of the chief of the Bedouins Āl Faḍl, Īsā b. Muḥannā, before al-Amīr Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad, the first caliph installed by Baybars. See Peter Holt, “Some Observations on the ‘Abbāsīd Caliphate of Cairo,” *BSOAS* 47/3 (1984): 501; Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 62. See the biography of al-Amīr Abū l-‘Abbās Aḥmad in al-Ṣafadī XIV:317–318 (n° 2819) and these of al-Amīr Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad, *ibid.* VII:384–386 (n° 3378).

2 Baybars accompanied the caliph as far as Damascus. They left Cairo in early Shawwāl 659/September 1261. It seems that it was at this point that Baybars changed his mind as to the number of horsemen who were to help the caliph in recapture Baghdad. The sources differ as to the reason he changed his mind and the number of horsemen involved. According to Ibn ‘Abd al-Zāhir (*Rawḍ*, 110–111), Baybars gave him several emirs (whose names he gives along with the number of their horsemen), some Bedouins, several Mamluks for his personal entourage, and engines of war.

3 Al-Maqrīzī I:537.

4 *Ḥusn*, 46.

sidelined Abū l-‘Abbās, stripping him of all power and imprisoning him in the Cairo citadel.

### The Investiture of the First Caliph, al-Imām al-Mustanşir bi-llāh

In Jumādā 659/April 1261, about six months after the murder of Sultan Quṭuz, the governor of Damascus sent missive to Cairo that a person claiming to be al-Amīr Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad b. al-Imām al-Zāhir b. al-Imām al-Nāşir had arrived in the city accompanied by some fifty Arab horsemen of the Bedouin Khafāja tribe.<sup>5</sup> The newcomer was supposedly the paternal uncle of the last caliph of Baghdad, al-Imām al-Musta‘şim bi-llāh, and the brother of al-Musta‘şim bi-llāh’s predecessor al-Imām al-Mustanşir bi-llāh.<sup>6</sup> Baybars quickly ordered the governors of all the cities through which the “kinsman of the Prophet” would pass on his way to Cairo that he was to be treated with the greatest respect and should be escorted by the chamberlains of Damascus. When the pretender to the caliphate arrived in Cairo on 9 Rajab 659/9 June 1261, the sultan organized a considerable show to impress the importance of the occasion on the entire population, regardless of creed. Baybars proceeded from the citadel to meet the future caliph, escorted by his vizier, al-Şāhib Bahā’ al-Dīn b. Ḥanā, the chief *qāḍī* of the city, Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb b. Bint al-A‘azz, sworn witnesses (*al-shuhūd*), muezzins, the emirs of his army, and the principal inhabitants of Cairo and Fustāṭ.<sup>7</sup> The Jews followed the procession bearing the Torah, and the Christians with the Gospel. Accompanied by the sultan, al-Amīr Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad entered Cairo wearing the insignia of the Abbasids (*shī‘ār banī l-Abbās*).<sup>8</sup>

Once public honours had been rendered to the future caliph by the highest religious, civil and military dignitaries of the state, and by the residents of Cairo at large, it was necessary, for his investiture to be juridically valid, that his claims be shown to be true and that he be proven to be a descendant of ‘Abbās, the uncle of the Prophet, that is, that he should have a Qurayshi *nasab*. It was therefore necessary to find trustworthy men whose word could serve as a guarantee of the *nasab* claimed by al-Amīr Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad.

5 *Rawḍ*, 141; *Zubdat*, 60; al-Yūnīnī 1:441; al-Maqrīzī 1:528–529.

6 *Rawḍ*, 100; *Zubdat*, 60; al-Maqrīzī 1:529.

7 On this judge and Baybars, see Sherman A. Jackson, “The Primacy of Domestic Politics: Ibn Bint al-A‘azz and the Establishment of Four Chief Judgeships in Mamlūk Egypt,” *JAOS* 115/1 (1995): 52–65.

8 *Rawḍ*, 99; *Zubdat*, 60; al-Yūnīnī 1:441; al-Maqrīzī 1:529.

The Arabs from Iraq and a eunuch from Baghdad certified that Amīr Abū l-Qāsim was the son of al-Imām al-Zāhir, the Commander of the Faithful, and the grandson of al-Imām al-Nāṣir, also Commander of the Faithful in his time. Nevertheless, to be valid, their word had to be confirmed by the highest religious authorities in Cairo. The *qāḍī* Jamāl al-Dīn Yaḥiyā, as deputy for the chief *qāḍī* of Fustāṭ, was the first to bear witness that the fact was confirmed by public belief.<sup>9</sup> His opinion was unanimously affirmed by the juriconsult ‘Alam al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Rashīd, the *qāḍī* and the other ‘*ulamā*’ who were there present. Finally, all these oral statements were approved by the chief *qāḍī* of Cairo, Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, and were set down in a document drawn up on his authority. And to give yet more weight to the drawing up of this document by which he recognized the claim as an irrefutable truth, Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb remained standing until it was completed.<sup>10</sup>

The process of establishing the caliph’s genealogy involved persons of quite different positions certifying his claim. The Arabs who had accompanied Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad could not be the only witnesses, even though they were the best-placed to act as guarantors. After the sack of Baghdad, Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad had taken refuge among the Arab tribes of Iraq. It may be supposed that the eunuch too, who had also been one of his party, had belonged to the harem of the caliph massacred during the sack of the city. But to give legal weight to the evidence of these witnesses, it had to be “certified” by a whole assembly of religious authorities. The chief *qāḍī* of Cairo, the city’s highest religious authority, then accepted the responsibility of acknowledging the veracity of their statements, but for his own oral statement to be valid, it had to be recorded in writing. It was this written instrument, of oral origins, which certified that the future caliph was indeed a descendant of ‘Abbās and therefore of Qurayshi blood.

After the caliph’s genealogy had been verified by oral testimony, and then authenticated by a written instrument, the next step in his ascension to the caliphal office could take place. All were now called upon to swear allegiance to him in the *bay‘a*, which entailed submission to his word. The oath of obedience sworn to Amīr Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad took place exactly in line with the ancient hierarchical process. The first to swear allegiance to a new caliph were those of high rank, in what was termed the *bay‘at al-khāṣṣa*, followed by the common people, in the *bay‘at al-‘amma*. The investiture of Cairo’s first Abbasid caliph conformed to this model. The first to swear allegiance was the chief *qāḍī*, Tāj al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb. One might have supposed that Sultan Baybars

9 *Rawḍ*, 100; *Ḥusn*, 37; *Zubdat*, 61; al-Maqrīzī 1:530.

10 *Rawḍ*, 100; *Ḥusn*, 37; *Zubdat*, 61; al-Maqrīzī, 1:530.

would be first in line, but given the political stakes of the investiture, it was essential that the first to swear allegiance be Cairo's most eminent religious figure. The new caliph took as his regnal name al-Mustanşir bi-llāh, the same name adopted by his brother, the second-last caliph to reign at Baghdad. One may imagine that this choice was a symbolic way of blurring an unpleasant past. Adopting the name of the last caliph of Baghdad to have died a natural death helped in the depiction of the Cairo caliphate as a continuation of that abolished by the Mongols.<sup>11</sup>

It was then Baybars' turn to swear allegiance to the Commander of the Believers. The sultan gave the caliph an oral commitment to follow the precepts of God's Book and the traditions of the Prophet, to "order good and forbid evil," to lead jihad in God's name (*al-jihād fī sabīl Allāh*), to take the riches granted by God only by legitimate means and to distribute them only to those worthy of them.<sup>12</sup> Baybars was thus taking upon himself most of the caliphal prerogatives, as formulated by al-Māwardī in his theory of *imāma*. After these two lofty figures, the shaykhs, emirs and great men of the state came to swear their allegiance to the new caliph. Once they had done so, again orally, the caliph al-Mustanşir bi-llāh granted Sultan Baybars power over the lands of Islam, and over all the territories that he might conquer from the infidels.<sup>13</sup> Thereupon, all classes of the people were admitted without exception to give their *bay'at al-ʿamma* to the new caliph.

The written word had no role in the oath of allegiance to the caliph. The *bay'a* to the Commander of the Faithful rested entirely on the strength of the sworn oath that bound each believer to the caliph. By this oral compact, the believer recognized his authority, and as a consequence, owed him obedience. Such, at least, was the theory, although in practical terms things did not necessarily work out this way—far from it. In any case, by restoring the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo, Baybars gained himself and the Mamluk sultanate an increased Islamic legitimacy in the eyes of the faithful, a legitimacy that served domestic purposes. This hypothesis was confirmed by the investiture ceremony that the caliph granted Baybars, which, as will be discussed below, was based on the public reading of a written instrument (*al-ʿahd* or *al-taqīd*). But at this point I wish to consider the appointment of the second caliph, which took place in a very different political context.

11 Al-Yūnīnī and al-Maqrīzī note that his adoption of his brother's name was unprecedented. On this question, see David Ayalon, "Studies on the Transfer of the ʿAbbāsīd Caliphate From Baġdād to Cairo," *Arabica* 7 (1960): 56–57.

12 *Rawḍ*, 100; *Husn*, 37; *Zubdat*, 61; al-Maqrīzī 1:530.

13 *Rawḍ*, 100; *Husn*, 37; *Zubdat*, 61.

## The Investiture of the Second Caliph

In contrast to the account of the pomp and ceremony that marked the first caliph's arrival in Cairo, Baybars' biographer Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir first mentions the name of the next claimant to the caliphate, al-Amīr Abū l-'Abbās Aḥmad, in a short chapter entitled: "Those who came to him [Baybars] in 660/1262."<sup>14</sup> He simply says that the sultan received him with honour and allotted him the same part of the citadel that al-Imām al-Mustanşir bi-llāh had occupied.<sup>15</sup> But the future caliph would quickly appear a mere puppet in Baybars' hands. He was brought out of his seclusion in the citadel, when the sultan received a group of Mongol refugees (*jamā'at al-tatār al-wāfidīn*)<sup>16</sup> and quickly decided to send ambassadors to Berke Khan in Muḥarram 661/November 1262.<sup>17</sup> Already in 659/1260, on hearing that the Khan of the Golden Horde had converted to Islam,<sup>18</sup> Baybars had written to him asking that he lead the jihad against the Tatars, that is, against the Ilkhans of Iran. Bringing holy war to the infidels was, Baybars wrote, one of the pillars of Islam. He accused Hülegü of having adopted the religion of Doquz Khatun, his Nestorian wife, and establishing the "religion of the cross" (*aqāma dīn al-şalīb*) in the place of Islam.<sup>19</sup>

On 2 Muḥarram 661/16 November 1262, Baybars organized a reception, attended by the Mongols and by his ambassadors, in which al-Imām al-Ḥākīm bi-amri-llāh participated. In the course of this solemn audience, the caliph was officially invested by *bay'a*,<sup>20</sup> his noble descent having been confirmed by the chief *qāḍī* Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb several days earlier. Baybars then ordered that his genealogical tree be drawn up. This being done, it was publicly read

14 *Rawḍ*, 87.

15 *Rawḍ*, 87. Most other sources, however, give a completely different version of these events, to the effect that the pretender, having arrived in Cairo on 27 Rabī' I 660/20 February 1262, was installed in the citadel and completely ignored by Baybars for over six months.

16 The term "refugees" here refers to those Mongols who had left Hülegü's army to join the khanat of the Golden Horde. At the moment of their arrival in Damascus 27 Dhū l-Qa'da 660/13 October 1262, Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir (*Rawḍ*, 137) refers to them as: *jamā'at kabīra min al-tatār musta'minīn wāfidīn*.

17 *Rawḍ*, 141.

18 See Jean Richard, "La conversion de Berke et le début de l'islamisation de la Horde d'Or," *Revue des études islamiques* 35 (1967): 173–184. See the exchanges of embassies in A.A. Khowaiter, *Baibars the First: His Endeavours and Achievements* (London, 1978), 43–67; P. Thorau, *Sultan Baibars I*, 143–160; Stefan Heideman, *Das Aleppiner Kalifat*, 160–173.

19 *Rawḍ*, 88–89.

20 *Rawḍ*, 141–142; *Husn*, 51–52; *Zubdat*, 78; al-Yūnīnī (1:530) gives the 9 Muḥarram; *Kanz* (VIII:87) gives no date but the year 660/1262.

before those present. The sultan then approached the caliph and orally swore allegiance to him, with commitments similar to those he had made to the previous caliph. He swore to follow the precepts of the Qur'an and the Sunna of the Prophet, to order good and forbid evil, to lead the holy war against the enemies of God, to protect the Muslims, and so forth. In return, al-Ḥākim bi-amri-llāh charged Baybars with the responsibility of protecting the Muslim territories, invited him to make the pilgrimage, and named him as his partner in protecting the true faith.<sup>21</sup> Immediately afterwards, those present, from all social classes, came to swear allegiance to the caliph. After the *bay'ā*, Baybars did not ask the new caliph for a deed of investiture, but he requested him to give a sermon the following day. The previous caliph's written act of investiture, to which Baybars owed all his legitimacy, is here replaced by an oral address delivered during the *khuṭba*. In this address, al-Ḥākim bi-amri-llāh expounds on the leadership of the community and on jihad. He paints a portrait of Baybars as the perfect warrior of the faith, chosen by God himself to restore the power of the Abbasid caliphs:

Praise be to God who has given [the family] of 'Abbās a pillar (*al-rukn*) and a supporter, and has aroused a sultan of his choosing to defend it. I praise God for good fortune and ill [. . .], I beseech his support against our enemies. I bear witness that there is no God but the one God and that he has no partner. I attest that Muḥammad is his servant and his messenger. May divine blessings be bestowed on him, his family and his companions, those stars chosen to guide men on the righteous path! And on the *imām* destined to serve as a model, on the four [rightly-guided] caliphs, on 'Abbās, the Prophet's paternal uncle, and on their immediate successors. May he weigh them down with good things (*bi-iḥsān*), until the day of judgement (*yūm al-dīn*)!

Know, O men, that the *imāma* is one of the obligatory requirements of Islam, that jihad has been commanded for all men, but that the standard of the holy war (*'alam al-jihād*) can only be raised if union prevails among the servants [of God]. Women have been borne away as prisoners because the laws of honour were violated, blood has been spilled due to injustice and crime. Have you not seen the enemies of Islam entering Baghdad under arms [. . .], cutting the throats of men, of warriors, of children, ravishing the caliph's wives [. . .]. On all sides horrific cries were heard, accompanied by tears and groans. On all sides there was uproar stirred by the terror of that long day. The white beards of old men were

21 *Rawḍ*, 142; *Zubdat*, 78.



dyed with blood, children wept and there was none to take pity on their sorrow! *So fear God as far you are able, and give ear, and obey, and expend well for yourselves. And whosoever is guarded against the avarice of his own soul, those they are the prosperers.*<sup>22</sup> There is no longer any pretext for failing to attack the enemies of the faith or to defend the Muslims.

This sultan, al-Malik al-Zāhir, the illustrious (*al-sayyid al-ajal*), just (*al-ādil*) and learned (*al-ālim*) lord, the holy warrior (*al-mujāhid*), the defender of the frontiers (*al-rābiʿ*), the pillar of the world and of the faith (*rukn al-dunyā wa-l-dīn*), girded himself to defend the *imāma*, which had left to it only a few warriors.<sup>23</sup> He scattered the infidel armies who had already reached the centre of our lands. Thanks to his pains, the oath of allegiance has everywhere been taken and the Abbasid dynasty has gained many soldiers. O servants of God, make haste to attest to your recognition of these great deeds! Show pure zeal and you shall be victorious. Fight Satan's partisans and you will gain the advantage. Do not allow yourselves to be frightened by previous events [...]. May God unite you in one feeling of piety and reinforce your triumph with faith. Beseech the forgiveness of God Almighty for me, for yourselves and for all Muslims. Beseech God, for he is merciful and compassionate.<sup>24</sup>

After his speech, the caliph had an interview with the Mongol emissaries. Baybars then sent Berke Khan, through his ambassadors, a copy of the caliph's genealogy going back to the Prophet himself. The document was written in gilded letters and furnished with certificates attesting to its authenticity. The two letters to the Khan of the Golden Horde were also read publicly.<sup>25</sup> After the departure of the ambassadors, the caliph was locked up in the citadel. His presence at the side of the Mamluk sultan, like his speech, were intended quite simply to present Baybars as the indisputable leader of the Muslim community. The speech was also meant to enhance the image of Baybars, a former slave without *nasab*, in the eyes of the Khan of the Golden Horde, a scion of the royal house of Genghis Khan.

22 Qurʾān 6:16.

23 All these descriptions are to be found in Baybars' inscriptions in Syria, see Denise Aigle, "Les inscriptions de Baybars dans le Bilād al-Šām," 60–66.

24 *Rawḍ*, 143; *Husn*, 51–52; *Zubdat*, 79; al-Maqrīzī 1:547–548.

25 Al-Maqrīzī 1:547–548. It should be noted that the document sent to Berke Khan gives the new caliph a prophetic lineage, when he was in fact only the great-grandson of the caliph al-Murtashid (512–29/1118–1135), see Peter Holt, "Some Observations," 501.

In this investiture, it is once more the chief *qāḍī*'s testimony that confirms the future caliph's *nasab*, but with much less pomp than in the previous instance, when various figures had acted as guarantors. There is no mention of Tāj al-Dīn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's oral recognition of his *nasab* having been confirmed by a written instrument. But at the moment of his investiture before the envoys of the Golden Horde, his genealogy was drawn up in writing on the orders of Baybars, who to some degree took the place of the chief *qāḍī* of Cairo. At the moment of the *bay'ā*, the sultan was the first to swear allegiance, and the name of the chief *qāḍī*, although he was certainly present, is not even mentioned. The master of ceremonies was Sultan Baybars, who won himself legitimacy by means of the occasion, this time for external consumption.

Let me turn now to the investiture ceremony that the caliph granted Baybars, which was based on the public reading of a written instrument.

### Baybars' Investiture Document: The Power of the Written Word

Baybars' investiture by the caliph al-Imām al-Mustanşir bi-llāh was the centre of an imposing ceremony held in a garden outside the city of Cairo.<sup>26</sup> On 4 Sha'bān 659/4 July 1261, the sultan arrived on horseback escorted by all the great dignitaries of the kingdom. The robes of honour which he was to distribute to various important figures were also brought. The sultan was in turn dressed in the caliphal robe of honour (*khil'at al-khalīfatīyya*) designed for him, and in which he appeared in public. Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir wrote: "He was like as to the full moon rising in a dark night."<sup>27</sup> Numerous swords were offered to him, one of which he girded on while the remainder were carried behind him. Two flags were held above his head along with two long arrows and a shield.<sup>28</sup> These were the *regalia* of power. The emphasis was on Sultan Baybars' role as warrior.<sup>29</sup> A white horse was brought to him, with a carpet as saddle and with a sash in the black of the Abbasids. It was then the turn of all the great religious, civil and military dignitaries to receive a robe of honour from the caliph.

26 *Rawḍ*, 101–110.

27 *Rawḍ*, 101.

28 *Rawḍ*, 101; *Husn*, 38; *Zubdat*, 61; al-Maqrīzī 1:531.

29 On the *regalia*, see Carl Becker, "La *ghāshīya* comme emblème de la royauté," in *Centenario della nascita di Michele Amari*, 2 vols. (Palermo, 1910) 2:148–151; Urbain Vermeulen, "Une note sur les insignes royaux des Mamelouks," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, eds. U. Vermeulen, and D. De Smet (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 355–361.

A rostrum was set up and Fakhr al-Dīn b. Luqmān,<sup>30</sup> the head of Baybars' chancellery (*ṣāhib dīwān al-inshā'*), ascended it to read out the diploma of investiture granted to the sultan by the caliph (*qara'a taqlīd al-khalīfiyya li-l-sultān*), which he had written down himself under the latter's authority.<sup>31</sup>

This text once more sets out and elaborates upon the sultan's commitments and the recommendations that the caliph gave him in his speech at the *bay'ā*. One notes that the spoken word is once again authenticated by the written. This deed of investiture can be read as a Mirror for the Princes. It is composed of six main parts. The introduction consists of a eulogy to God by the caliph, his profession of faith, and his salutations to the Prophet and his family. The other five parts concern Baybars. The sultan is first of all described in terms of his lofty deeds and virtues: "All the brilliant qualities are joined [...] in the person [...] of the sultan al-Zāhir." It is interesting to observe that, as with the Mongols, he is to some degree granted a divine mandate: "If he asks anyone to submit to him, he is obeyed by the dwellers in the plains and those in the mountains." The sultan is then praised "for having raised up again the dynasty of the Abbasids, after the blows of fortune had cast it down." It may be noted here that the author neglects to mention the execution of the last caliph of Baghdad. It thus appears that the document seeks to erase the memory of the trauma experienced by Islam. In this first paragraph, dedicated to the praise of Baybars, the emphasis is on his role as restorer of the caliphate: "He has given proof of a zeal to defend the faith and inaugurate the caliph that only he could display. Had any other person attempted the undertaking, he would have failed utterly." Fakhr al-Dīn b. Luqmān, the author of the text, makes a veiled reference to the offences for which Baybars would have to account to God—his two regicides. He writes:

God will store up these acts of sublime virtue (by Baybars), so that on the day of the resurrection, the rewards due to this prince will tip the scales and the account he will have to make for his faults will amount to very little.

A paragraph is dedicated to listing the regions that the caliph has placed under Baybars' rule: Egypt, Syria, Diyār Bakr, Hijaz, Yemen, and the banks of the Euphrates, amounting to all the lands of the eastern Islamic empire that had

30 *Rawḍ*, 101; *Husn*, 38; *Zubdat*, 61, gives only the title (*ṣāhib dīwān al-inshā' al-sharīfā*); al-Maqrīzī 1:531.

31 Text of the *taqlīd* in *Husn*, 38–44; *Zubdat*, 61–65; Qutb al-Dīn al-Yūnīnī 1:443–449; *Kanz* VIII:73–79; al-Maqrīzī 1:531–534.

not fallen under Mongol control. The next paragraph sets out to incite the sultan to treat his subjects with justice, generosity and mercy:

Practise mercy and justice zealously [. . .]. God gave these precepts in the Qurʾān. Thanks to [these virtues], he pardons the crimes and iniquities committed by men. A day devoted to these virtues has the same value as sixty years of pious works. Whoever follows the paths of justice will not fail to enjoy its fruits.

These are the classic recommendations of the treatises on the ethics of statecraft. The penultimate part of the document also borrows from the subject matter of the *Mirrors for the Princes*. Baybars is instructed to choose his governors and military and civil staff well and have them supervised by trustworthy persons, for the sultan himself will be answerable to God for any ill deeds they commit. The document ends with a long discussion of the necessity of leading the holy war. Although Baybars's brilliant deeds had already distinguished him in this regard, the caliph orders him not to slacken in his efforts. He is particularly enjoined to take care of border posts (*al-thaghūr*) and port cities. In other words, he must ensure the integrity of the territory over which he exercises his sovereignty against the two enemies of the day: the Mongols and the Franks.

The head of Baybars' chancellery, the author of this text drawn up on the instructions of the caliph, if not indeed of the sultan or his advisors, structures his document very well. Building on the oral commitments made by Baybars when he swore allegiance to the caliph, and using the classic ideas of the *Mirrors for the Princes*, he emphasizes the warrior role of a sultan considered to be a fighter for Islam. In this diploma of investiture, the author enlarges the themes of the oral commitments made at the moment of the *bayʿa*, using his epistolary skill and his knowledge of the ethics of statecraft. It must also be emphasized that the words spoken at the moment of the *bayʿa*, here enlarged upon in writing, would have to be reconverted to oral form in order for both Baybars' virtues and his duties to his subjects to be made known to all.

Once the document had been read out, the sultan, mounted on his white horse and wearing the caliphal robe of honour, rode through the city of Cairo, followed by his emirs, on horseback or on foot, according to their rank. The sultan's vizier, al-Şāhib Bahā' al-Dīn b. Ḥanā, solemnly bore the diploma before him for all the population to see. In this ceremony, the utter absence of the caliph is notable. The scene was intended to prove that Baybars was indeed the legitimate sovereign of the Mamluk sultanate, despite the stains of his two regicides—particularly the killing of sultan Quṭuz only a few months earlier.

The restoration of the Abbasid caliphate in Cairo was indisputably intended to confer an Islamic legitimacy upon a ruler who was, at least initially, liable to be seen as illegitimate. The account of the enthronement of the first caliph, al-Imām al-Mustanşir, along with the monumental epigraphy, confirms this hypothesis.<sup>32</sup> Here the operation was one of legitimization on the domestic stage. The investiture of al-Ḥākim bi-amri-llāh, by contrast, was clearly intended to facilitate favourable relations between Baybars and the ruler of the Golden Horde. Berke Khan had become Muslim by his own choice, unlike Baybars who, like all Mamluks, had been superficially converted. The Mongol Khan may thus have seemed, as Ghazan Khan did later, a potential leader of the *umma*. Baybars' interest in holy places, clearly apparent in his inscriptions, should be understood as a geopolitical approach to gaining leadership of the community of believers. Finally, we may observe how closely the oral and the written are interlinked in the various ways in which the caliph and sultan recognize each other's legitimacy. The spoken word does not become definitive until it is written down, but the written instrument in turn can only establish its own legitimacy by being spoken out aloud.

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32 See the study of Baybars' inscriptions by Denise Aigle, "Les inscriptions de Baybars."

## Ghazan Khan's Invasions of Syria. Polemics on His Conversion to Islam and the Christian Troops in His Army

We might have expected Ghazan Khan's official conversion to Islam, just before he was enthroned in 680/1295, to put an end to the enmity between the Ilkhans and the Mamluks. His conversion certainly had a great impact in the Muslim world, especially in Damascus where Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm b. Ṣa'd al-Dīn Muḥammad,<sup>1</sup> who had received his profession of faith, told the story in the Ribāṭ al-Sumaysāṭī beside the Umayyad Mosque. But far from bringing in an era of peace, Ghazan Khan was in fact responsible for more attacks upon Bilād al-Shām than any other Ilkhanid ruler. His first campaign took place in the winter of 699/1299–1300. The Ilkhan seized part of Syria and briefly occupied Damascus.<sup>2</sup> The second invasion began in autumn 700/October 1300, but ended without the Mongol troops having engaged the Mamluk forces. Finally, the third campaign began in Jumādā 702/January 1303 and ended with the Mamluk victory at Marj al-Ṣuffar,<sup>3</sup> on 2 Ramaḍān 702/20 April 1303.<sup>4</sup>

\* This chapter is a revised and very amplified version of a paper published under the title: "La légitimité islamique des invasions de la Syrie par Ghazan Khan," *Eurasian Studies* v/1–2 (2006): 5–29.

- 1 Ṣadr al-Dīn Ibrāhīm's father was disciple of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā, see Charles Melville, "Pādīsāh-i islām: The Conversion of Sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān," *Pembroke Papers* 1 (1990): 165. He was a member of the great Damascene Sufi family of Iranian origin, the Banū Ḥamaway, who enjoyed great renown in the city, see Louis Pouzet, *Damas au VII<sup>e</sup>/XIII<sup>e</sup> s. Vie et structures religieuses dans une métropole islamique* (Beirut: Dar El-Machreq, 1991), 213–214. That the shaykh had been the one to receive Ghazan Khan's profession of faith no doubt won the latter support among part of the population of Damascus.
- 2 On this military campaign, see Reuven Amitai, "Whither the Ilkhanid Army? Ghazan's First Campaign into Syria (1299–1300)," in *Warfare in Inner Asian History (500–1800)*, ed. N. Di Cosmo (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 225–253; "The Mongol Occupation of Damascus in 1300: A Study of Mamluk Loyalties," in *The Mamluks in Egyptian and Syrian Politics and Society*, eds. M. Winter and A. Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 21–39.
- 3 Marj al-Ṣuffar was a prairie lying south of Damascus, and was an excellent place for armies as fodder and water.
- 4 On these three campaigns, see Anne F. Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 73–93, and an abstract of Ghazan Khan's campaigns in Syria in Angus D. Stewart, *The Armenian Kingdom*

Ghazan Khan undertook his first invasion with the king of Cilicia, Het'um II (r. 1289–1307), and Georgian Christians.<sup>5</sup> But the Mongol ranks included also a certain number of renegade Mamluks, led by the former governor of Damascus, Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq al-Manṣūrī (d. 701/1310–11) who was *nā'ib* of Damascus at the end of al-Malik al-Manṣūr Lāchīn (r. 696–98/1297–99)'s reign.<sup>6</sup> The Mamluk soldiers helped Ghazan Khan gain victory at Wadī al-Khaznadār on 27 Rabī' I 699/22 December 1299. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and his army ran away to Egypt. On 12 Rabī' I 699/6 January 1300, Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq seized power in Damascus, but the Citadel put up a vigorous resistance under the instructions of his governor, 'Alam al-Dīn al-Jamdār Arjūwāsh al-Manṣūrī. The talks aiming at broking the surrender of the Citadel of Damascus without a fight failed. Its siege began at the start of Jumādā I 699/24 January 1300 but, in mi-Jumādā II 699/early February 1300, Ghazan Khan suddenly decided to return to Persia, leaving his great emir Quṭluḡ-Shāh and Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq at the head of a small contingent of troops in Syria.<sup>7</sup> Shortly after, the Mamluks took back the power in Damascus. Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq then abandoned his allegiance to the Mongols of Iran.

Ghazan Khan's reign, thus, by no means led to harmony between the Ilkhans and the Mamluks. Apart from his commitment to the Mongol ideology of conquest according to which all peoples should submit to Mongol rule, Ghazan Khan seems to have aspired, as a Muslim sovereign, to control the eastern Muslim world. The title of "King of Islam" (*pādishāh al-islām*) which he took upon his conversion supports this supposition. According to Rashīd al-Dīn's account, religious motives spurred his first invasion of Syria in 699/1299–1300. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's soldiers entered Ilkhanid territory, at Mārdīn, where, during the month of Ramaḍān 698/June 1299, they had given

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*and the Mamluks. War and Diplomacy During the Reigns of Het'um II (1289–1307)* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 136–153.

- 5 On the relations between Mongols and Armenians, see Bayarsaikhan Dashdondog, "Some Dynamics of Mongol-Armenian Interactions," *Bazmavep* 3–4 (2010): 597–615; *The Mongols and the Armenians (1220–1335)* (Leiden: Brill, 2011). The principal Arabic sources on this campaign are: al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:99–124 (Arabic text); I:135–164 (English translation); *Kanz* IX:15–36; *Beiträge*, 56–79; *Nihāyat* XXXI:380–400; *Zubdat*, 328–345; Ibn Abī-l-Faḍālī XIV:471–506.
- 6 Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq was of Mongolian origin. He was Damascus governor from 687/1297 to 698/1298, see *Durar* III:213–215.
- 7 The reason for the Ilkhan's hasty retreat from Damascus is not clear from the Mamluk sources. Rashīd al-Dīn (*Ta'rikh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 130) states: "As the weather was becoming hot [...] the sovereign withdrew from Damascus." On the logistical difficulties encountered by the Mongol troops in Syria, see David Morgan, "Mongols in Syria, 1260–1300," in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. P.W. Edelbury (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985), 231–235.

themselves over to reprehensible acts (*af'āl-i makrūh*) with the daughters of Muslims, and furthermore had indulged in drinking bouts in the mosques.<sup>8</sup> Ghazan Khan thus set himself up as the protector of members of the *umma*, since the “*‘ulamā*’ of Islam” had charged him in a *fatwā* with avenging the population of Mārdīn.<sup>9</sup>

I will analyse here the religious arguments that pepper two documents issued by Ghazan Khan on the occasion of his two first incursions into Syria (the text of guarantee of peace for Damascus, and a letter addressed to Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad). These texts fall into the earlier tradition of submission of all peoples of the Earth to Mongol rule, but here, the mandate of Eternal Heaven is not directly invoked. The Ilkhan, through a subtle Islamic religious argument, justifies his attempts to conquer Syria and treats the Mamluk sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad as his subordinate. The latter’s answer argues away all religious arguments in a “counter-argumentation.”

### The Texts and their Transmission

The first document analysed here is the text of Ghazan Khan’s *amān* sparing the lives of the population of Damascus, read in the Omayyad Mosque on 8 Rabī 11 699/2 January 1300 while the Mongol troops, some days after their victory at Wādī al-Khaznadār on 27 Rabī 1 699/22 December 1299, occupied the city and sought to capture the Citadel. The second document is the text of a letter sent by Ghazan Khan in 700/1301 to sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, some months after he had invaded northern Syria for the second time. These documents have been transmitted to us only by Mamluk sources, some contemporary with the events and others later.<sup>10</sup> Generally speaking, the transmission of documents supposedly issued by the Ilkhans poses the thorny question of authenticity. It seems that many of these letters were composed in Mongolian, but none have reached us in their original form. For the most part we have only translations that were included in the Mamluk chronicles. As was the case with the letters sent by the Mongol Great Khans to the political and religious authorities of the Latin West, intermediaries would have been

8 Rashīd al-Dīn, *Ta’rīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 124. This claim is supported by Abū l-Fidā’, *Memoirs of a Syrian Prince. Abu’l-Fidā’, Sultan of Ḥamāh (672–732/1273–1331)*, trans. P.M. Holt (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1983), 35.

9 Rashīd al-Dīn, *Ta’rīkh-i mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 125.

10 To avoid rendering this account of the sources indigestible, the profiles of the various authors and the works that reproduce the documents analysed here are set out in the appendix 1 and 2.



employed to translate these documents and adapt them with cultural references suitable to the addressees: thus the use of Qurʾānic quotations in the translations into Arabic.

The text of the *amān* to the population of Damascus, dated from 5 Rabīʿ II 699/3 December 1299, seems to have been transmitted quite faithfully by several Mamluk historians: the text must have been composed directly in Arabic, given that the few differences between the versions do not in any way alter the meaning.<sup>11</sup> The text of the letter that Ghazan Khan addressed to al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, by contrast, has come down to us by two different transmissions which diverge significantly from each other, notably in the more aggressive tone used to address the Mamluk sultan and in the employment of Qurʾānic quotations in support of the Ilkhan's argument. One version A is given by several Egyptian writers: Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār (d. 732/1331–32), Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (d. 732/1331–32) and Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī (d. 821/1418). A greater number of sources, again the mostly the work of Egyptian historians—Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. al-Dawādārī, al-Mufaḍḍāl b. Abī l-Faḍā'il, and Abū l-Maḥāsīn Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Taghrī Birdī (d. 874/1469–70)—give the second version B, as does one Syrian author, a contemporary of the events in question, Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 726/1325–26).<sup>12</sup>

Al-Malik al-Nāṣir sent an official response to Ghazan Khan through the latter's embassies.<sup>13</sup> Once again, we are faced with two diverging transmissions.<sup>14</sup> We have a version A, recopied by al-Nuwayrī and al-Qalqadshandī, reportedly written on 28 Muḥarram 701/3 October 1301. It should be noted that this transmission abounds in identical Qurʾānic quotations by the two authors—which is a very rare occurrence—nineteen by al-Nuwayrī, eighteen by al-Qalqashandī. Version B was transmitted by two contemporaries of the events: al-Yūnīnī and Ibn al-Dawādārī, as well as by Mufaḍḍāl b. Abī l-Faḍā'il.<sup>15</sup>

According to the dates on which the authors copied these correspondences, it would seem that the two transmissions circulated around the same period. Al-Nuwayrī<sup>16</sup> and al-Qalqashandī<sup>17</sup> claim to have recopied that letter from a manuscript written by al-Mawlā al-Qāḍī 'Alā' al-Dīn 'Alī b. al-Mawlā

11 See appendix 1.

12 See appendix 2.

13 *Zubdat*, 356; *Nihāyat* xxxi:430; *Ṣubḥ* vii:265.

14 See appendix 3.

15 al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo ii:243–247; i:194–198; *Kanz* ix:66–68; Ibn Abi l-Faḍā'il xx:571–580.

16 *Nihāyat* xxxi:266.

17 *Ṣubḥ* vii:242.

al-Marḥūm Faṭḥ al-Dīn Muḥammad b. al-Qāḍī al-Marḥūm Muḥyī al-Dīn ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Zāhir. This long lineage going back to the *ṣāhib dīwān al-inshā’* of Baybars is probably a way of authenticating the value of the transmission of that correspondence in relation to the original. Al-Qalqashandī indicated that the *qāḍī* was “*ṣāhib dīwān al-inshā’ bi-diyār al-miṣriyya*.”<sup>18</sup> The authors of version B make no mention as to its origin. The text closest to the original is probably version A. This seems to be confirmed by the content of the letter, which partially ties in with the argumentation of Ibn Taymiyya’s *fatwās* against Ghazan Khan’s Islam and the Mongol political regime.<sup>19</sup>

### Jihad against the Mamluk Regime

Ghazan Khan’s conversion to Islam has often been considered a turning point in the history of the Persian Ilkhanate. Al-Waṣṣāf presents him as renewing Islam, and Amīr Nawrūz, the architect of his conversion, is called a “second Abū Muslim.”<sup>20</sup> Nawrūz reportedly succeeded in having the Ilkhan declare Islam the official religion of the realm and issue a *yarlīgh* ordering the destruction of churches, synagogues and Buddhist temples.<sup>21</sup> Al-Waṣṣāf, in thus associating Ghazan Khan with Nawrūz, is probably trying to present the Islamic Ilkhanid regime as the successor of the Caliphate of Baghdad. The Ilkhan, for that matter, reportedly had black banners made, like those used by the Abbasid caliphs.<sup>22</sup> All these symbolic acts were for the benefit of his Persian subjects. Nevertheless, Ghazan Khan, even after his conversion, remained strongly attached to his Mongol culture.<sup>23</sup>

### *Ghazan Khan Leader of the Islamic Community*

The Syrian campaign, coming four years after Ghazan Khan’s adoption of the Muslim faith, seems to have been intended to present him as leader of the *umma*. The cause invoked to legitimize the campaign was, as we have seen, the misdeeds of the Mamluk troops at Mārdīn. The Persian sources, as well as

18 *Ṣubḥ* VII:242.

19 See chapter 13.

20 Charles Melville, “*Pādisāh-i islām*,” 170.

21 On the policy of a return to Islam put into operation by Nawrūz, see Jean Aubin, *Émirs mongols et vizirs persans*, 62.

22 Charles Melville, “*Pādisāh-i islām*,” 164–170; Jean Calmard, “Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans,” in *L’Iran face à la domination mongole*, 281.

23 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, “Ghazan, Islam and Mongol Tradition,” 1–10.

Abū l-Fidā' (d. 732/1331), the Ayyubid ruler and historian of Ḥamā, bear witness to that. But a careful reading of the two versions of the letter addressed to the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad shows that Ghazan Khan's main objective was far more ambitious.

Ghazan Khan's wish to portray himself as leader of the *umma* is clearly to be seen in the text of his *amān*. It is replete with quotations from the Qur'ān and Hadiths in support of his claims.<sup>24</sup> The document begins by praising God: "By the power of God Most High" (*bi-quwwat Allāh ta'ālā*).<sup>25</sup> There then follow the names of the addressees: "The emirs of Ten Thousand, of One Thousand, of One Hundred, and all your victorious soldiers, Mongols, Persians,<sup>26</sup> Armenians, Georgians, as well as others who obey us (*tā'atnā*)."<sup>27</sup> Ghazan Khan's announcement follow, set out in three main sections.

The first section recalls the Ilkhan's official conversion to Islam, which marked the end of the rule of that part of *dār al-islām* by what was considered an infidel power.<sup>28</sup> According to the text of the *amān*, it was God himself who had chosen to call upon Ghazan Khan to embrace Islam, by opening his heart to the light of the Islamic faith:

Is he whose breast God has expanded unto Islam, so he walks in a light from his Lord? But woe to those whose hearts are hardened against the remembrance of God. Those are in manifest error.<sup>29</sup>

The Mamluk sources often cast doubt on Ghazan Khan's inward conviction at the time of his conversion. This Qur'ānic quotation is intended to show that the Ilkhan's faith is true and sincere. By contrast, here the Mamluks are those

24 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:102–104; 1:139–142; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-islām*, sub 699, 75–77; *Kanz* 1X:20–23; *Beiträge*, 66–68; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XIV:476–481.

25 In the text transmitted by Ibn al-Dawādārī and Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il, the eulogy of God includes an extra phrase: "By the power of God Most High [and the good fortune of the sultan Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān's reign] (*bi-quwwat Allāh ta'ālā [wa iqbāl dawlat sulṭān Maḥmūd Ghāzān Khān]*)." This second part of the eulogy might be described a carbon copy of the intitulation of the letters sent by the Great Khans.

26 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:102 (*al-bārik*), for *al-tājik*; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-islām*, sub 699, 75; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XIV:477 (*al-tāzik*); *Kanz* 1X:20; *Beiträge*, 62 (*al-tatār*).

27 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:102; 1:139; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'riḫ al-islām*, sub 699, 75; *Kanz* 1X:21; *Beiträge*, 62; *Nihāyat* XXXI:244; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XIV:476.

28 It is true that the Ilkhan Tegüder Aḥmad had ruled as a Muslim, but his very short reign had not created any such stir in *dār al-islām*, and was not marked by any significant religious change in the Persian Ilkhanat.

29 Qur'ān 39:22.

who remain deaf to God's call, and they are mere slaves, Islamicized but not converted of their own free will, which in itself fails to conform to the precepts of Islam.

This Qur'anic verse serves to link the first part of the text to the second, in which Ghazan Khan denounces the Mamluk regime:

The rulers (*al-ḥukkām*) of Egypt and Syria had departed from the path of Islam (*kharijūna 'an ṭarīq al-islam*) [. . .]. They failed to keep the rules of Islam (*bi-ḥukm al-islām*).

The term *al-ḥukkām*, which refers to ordinary governors, is perhaps used to emphasize Ghazan Khan's superiority over the Mamluk sultans and, therefore, his right to be leader of the Muslim community. The text of the *amān* underlines the desire for loyalty among the Mamluks, leading to disorder among the population: "He would hasten about the Earth, to do corruption there and to destroy the tillage and the stock, and God loves not corruption."<sup>30</sup> Ghazan Khan here denounces the rivalry among the various emirs and their Mamluk households. These resulted in considerable political instability, exacerbated in this period by the youth of the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.<sup>31</sup> In his *firmān*, Ghazan Khan alludes to the infamies committed at Mārdīn, accusing the Mamluks of setting about the wives and property of Muslims. According to the Ilkhan, justice and equity no longer exist in the realm: "Our fervour for Islam has led us to march on this country with a multitude of soldiers in order to end oppression and wipe out tyranny."<sup>32</sup> Ghazan Khan thus presents himself as the antithesis of the Mamluk sultan, for he has come to Bilād al-Shām to spread justice (*al-'adl*) and charity (*al-iḥsān*). A Qur'anic quotation illustrates his words: "Surely God bids to justice and good-doing and giving to kinsmen; and He forbids indecency, dishonor, and insolence, admonishing you, so that haply you will remember."<sup>33</sup>

The third part of the text is once again dedicated to Ghazan Khan in his role as the perfect Muslim sovereign, with all the characteristics of the ideal prince.

30 Qur'ān 2:205.

31 At the time of the first invasion of Syria, the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir (second reign, 1299–1309), then aged fifteen, was at the head of the Mamluks forces. Actual power was, however, held by the great emirs. On sultan's want of authority, see P.M. Holt, *The Age of the Crusades: The Near East From the Eleventh Century to 1517* (London, 1986), 107–113.

32 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:103; 1:140; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-islām*, sub 699, 76; *Kanz* 1x:21; *Beiträge*, 62; *Nihāyat* xxx1:245; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xiv:477.

33 Qur'ān 16:90.

His resounding victory over the rebellious enemy (*al-'adūw al-ṭaghiyya*) is clear proof that he is assisted by God and that he: “tore them utterly in pieces.”<sup>34</sup> And eventually “the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) has come, and falsehood (*al-bāṭil*) has vanished away; surely falsehood is ever certain to vanish.”<sup>35</sup> God’s help shows that his presence in Syria is in pursuit of a just cause. The Ilkhan and his troops, in proof of their recognition of God, have their hearts even further open to receive Islam:

God has endeared to them belief, decking it fair in their hearts, and He has made detestable to them unbelief and ungodliness and disobedience [to God]. Those they are the right-minded, by God’s favor and blessing.<sup>36</sup>

This Qur’ānic quotation once more testifies to the sincerity of their belief: they are engaged in a just jihad against the Mamluks. But we may observe an obvious discrepancy with the facts: Ghazan Khan’s army included Armenian and Georgian Christians whose hearts had not been opened to Islam! The text ends by presenting Ghazan Khan as protector of the population of Bilād al-Shām, his new subjects. As such, he is obliged to punish those of his soldiers who have engaged in reprehensible acts against civilians:

In the confusion [of battle] a few soldiers engaged in pillaging.<sup>37</sup> They have been killed to make an example, and so that they may cause no harm to people of other religions (*ahl al-adyān*) on the pretext that their beliefs are different as well, regardless whether those are Jews, Christians, or Sabians, as long as they pay the poll tax (*al-jizya*), fulfilling their legal status. Defending them is one of the requirements of Islamic law.<sup>38</sup>

Ghazan Khan thus presents himself as shepherd of a flock consisting of his subjects as a whole, regardless of denomination. The Prophet said, “The

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34 Qur’ān 34:19.

35 Qur’ān 17:81.

36 Qur’ān 49:7–8.

37 Not a few, but a great many soldiers had engaged in pillaging, foremost of them the Armenians in Ghazan Khan’s army. The most glaring cases of pillage by the Armenians took place in al-Ṣālihiyya and the Ghūṭa, two districts that lay outside the city walls. On the Mongol troops’s exactions, see Reuven Amitai, “The Mongol Occupation of Damascus,” 29.

38 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:103; 1:141; al-Dhahabī, *Ta’rikh al-islām*, sub 699, 77; *Kanz* IX:22–23; *Beiträge*, 62; *Nihāyat* XXXI:245; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā’il XIV:480.

imam in charge of people is their guardian. Every guardian is responsible for his subjects.”<sup>39</sup>

In this document, the Ilkhan follows the Mongol tradition of treating all religions equally, even though the clinching argument is Islamic. Ghazan Khan's emphasis on the obligation to protect non-Muslims was probably intended to attract the Christian populations of Bilād al-Shām to his cause. The purpose of the *amān* to the people of Damascus, at this crucial point in the city's history, was to convince the Damascenes that his presence in Syria was justified: he had come to protect the civilian population against the exactions of a regime that was spreading corruption and disorder. The text, read as it was during the Friday prayer in the Omayyad Mosque, close by the Citadel whose garrison still refused to surrender, had considerable symbolic value. The stage was carefully set for the event. The previous evening in the Bādharā'iyya madrasa,<sup>40</sup> the *amān* guaranteeing safety for the people of Damascus had been shown to the city's dignitaries, foremost among them the religious leaders. It was then placed in a leather case (*huwa fī kīs jild*).<sup>41</sup> The following day, a great crowd gathered in the mosque. The *amān* was read twice: first of all by a “collaborator of the Tatars,”<sup>42</sup> probably a Persian who could read Arabic.<sup>43</sup> But to confirm its terms, then the muezzin, a man named al-Mujāhid, read it again.

The *amān*, as can be seen, is almost entirely composed of Qur'ānic quotations, perfectly chosen to illustrate the general meaning of the text which is structured as a triptych. The first and third parts extol Ghazan Khan's sincere faith and his qualities as the ideal Muslim ruler. These two parts of the *amān* frame the central part of the text, which is concerned with denouncing the illegitimacy of the tyrannical Mamluk regime, the spreader of disorder.

The variations among the different transmissions of this document are minimal and the scriptural quotations are quite identical, a rare occurrence in different versions of the same document. It is very likely that the text of the *amān* was composed while Ghazan Khan was in his camp at Marj al-Rāhiṭ,<sup>44</sup> and the Damascene religious leaders were endeavouring to win a promise of

39 Al-Bukhārī, *Aḥkām*, 1; *Istiqrād*, 20.

40 One of the city's many Shafī'ite madrasas.

41 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:101; 1:138; *Kanz* IX:20. The document was probably written on a roll like the Mongol *yarliḡh*.

42 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:102; 1:139; al-Dhababī, *Ta'riḡh al-islām*, sub 699, 20 (*rajuḡ min 'awān al-tatār*); *Kanz* IX:20; *Beiträge* 62; Ibn Abī l-Faḡā'il XIV:476. The name of this man is not given in any of the sources.

43 This hypothesis is supported by al-Nuwayrī (XXXI:244), who speaks of a Persian companion of the Amīr Ismā'īl.

44 Marj al-Rāhiṭ was a plain near Damascus.

safety for the city's civilian inhabitants from Damascus. Ghazan Khan would not himself have been able to dictate a text peppered with Qur'anic quotations to his scribe. His Islamic faith was rudimentary and he had no knowledge of Arabic language, as is evident from his having required an interpreter when he received the delegation of Damascene notables. In all likelihood the Ilkhan outlined the main points of the document to one of the religious scholars who accompanied him on his campaign. Among the high-ranking persons mentioned in the Mamluk sources are the *shaykh al-mashā'ikh* Nizām al-Dīn Maḥmūd and the minister of pious foundations, Aṣīl al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.<sup>45</sup> One of them could well have composed the Arabic text and chosen the Qur'anic quotations most suitable to support Ghazan Khan's claims.

The Ilkhan's *amān*, addressed in the first place to his military commanders and enjoining them to respect the civilian population, had the principal purpose of convincing the people of Damascus that he was an accomplished Muslim ruler and that his invasion of Syria was a just cause. The reading of the text, in that most symbolic of Damascene settings, the great Omayyad Mosque, did not prevent numerous abuses being committed against a population that included many supporters of Ghazan Khan. Only the stalwart Citadel resisted, its commander Sanjar Arjūwāsh declaring: "Your sultan is still in power!" But even before Ghazan Khan's *amān* was read, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's name was no longer being pronounced in the Friday *khutba*.<sup>46</sup> On 13 Rabī' II 699/7 January 1300, in the mosques the preachers gave the sermons in Ghazan Khan's name to show the change in power in Syria.<sup>47</sup>

### From the Jihad to the Submission of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad

Despite his hurried return to Persia without even conquering the citadel of Damascus, Ghazan Khan had by no means abandoned his ambitions in Bilād al-Shām and further afield. Some seven months later, on 13 Muḥarram 700/28 August 1300, Mamluk spies (*al-quṣṣād*) brought word to Damascus that the Ilkhan had mustered a vast army and planned to invade Egypt.<sup>48</sup> Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad made troops ready to repel the enemy. Having left Cairo on 13 Ṣafar 700/28 October 1300, the Mamluk forces took up position in northern

45 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:119; I:158; *Kanz* IX:32.

46 Reuven Amitai, "The Mongol Occupation of Damascus," 28.

47 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:107; I:144; *Kanz* IX:37; *Beiträge*, 66.

48 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:205; I:175; *Zubdat*, 349; *Kanz* IX:45; *Nihāyat* XXXI:257–258; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XX:537.

Syria. The weather was so bad, due to a particularly severe winter, that towards the end of Rabi' II/January 1301 al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad decided to retreat to Cairo without having engaged the Ilkhanid forces.<sup>49</sup> Having crossed the Euphrates, Ghazan Khan set up camp south of Aleppo and sent troops on raids to Ḥamā, Sarmīn, Jabal Sumāq<sup>50</sup> and the Antioch region.<sup>51</sup> But after forty days of rain and snow, short of provisions and having lost many men and horses, he headed back to the Ilkhanate. News of the Mongol retreat reached Damascus in Jumādā II/February 1301.

The withdrawal of the Mamluk armies had caused disorder to break out in Syria. The people of Damascus felt abandoned by the authorities. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad had one more risked losing Damascus in order to return to Cairo because of the weather. The Mamluk historians do not criticise the sultan's rather undistinguished course of action, which they explain in religious terms. If the two armies did not meet, that was the God's will: "And God has sent back those that were unbelievers in their rage, and they attained no good; God spared the believers of fighting. Surely God is All-strong, All-mighty."<sup>52</sup>

### *The Mongol Embassy to Cairo*

Some four months after his retreat from Syria, in the middle of Ramaḍān 700/May 1301,<sup>53</sup> Ghazan Khan wrote a letter to al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.<sup>54</sup> He charged several emissaries with bringing it to Cairo. All the sources describe this embassy in detail.<sup>55</sup> It was made up of a military commander, al-Amīr Nāṣir al-Dīn 'Alī Kh<sup>w</sup>āja, and a judge and preacher from Mawṣil, al-Qāḍī Ḍiyā' al-Dīn

49 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:206; I:176; *Zubdat*, 350; *Nihāyat* XXXI:258; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xx:540; Ibn al-Dawādārī (IX:45) mentions that the sultan remained in northern Syria until the end of Rabi' II; he does not explicitly state that the retreated to Cairo.

50 The Mongol forces took many prisoners. They were sold for then dirhams to the king of Cilicia who sent them to the lands of the Franks. See Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:206–207; I:176; *Kanz* IX:46; *Nihāyat* XXXI:258; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xx:542.

51 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:206–7; I:176; *Kanz* IX:46; *Nihāyat* XXXI:258; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xx:541–542. Baybars al-Manṣūrī does not report these events.

52 Qur'ān, 33:25. Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:207; I:177; *Kanz* IX:47; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xx:542–543.

53 *Zubdat*, 353; *Nihāyat* XXXI:554; *Ṣubḥ* VIII:71. According to al-Qalqashandī, the letter was written at Jibāl al-Akrad.

54 As noted above, this letter has been transmitted in two versions, henceforth version A and version B.

55 On this diplomatic mission and the exchange of gifts, see Donald Little, "Diplomatic Mission and Gifts Exchanged by Mamluks and Ilkhans," in *Beyond the Legacy of Genghis Khan*, 30–35.



Muḥammad b. Bahā' al-Dīn b. Kamāl al-Dīn b. Yūnis al-Shāfi'ī al-Khaṭīb<sup>56</sup> and twenty people, servants included.<sup>57</sup> The Ilkhan's envoys arrived in Damascus at night on 23 Dhū l-Qa'da 700/31 July 1301. They were quartered at the Citadel, where they remained for several days. On 28 Dhū l-Qa'da/3 August, again by night, three of them, the commander and the juge, accompanied by a "Tatar-Turk slave" set out for Cairo escorted by al-Amīr Sayf al-Dīn Kurāy al-Silāḥdār, and post riders. They reached Cairo on the night of 15 Dhū l-Ḥijja/22 August 1301 and were stayed in Qal'a Jabal. The following evening the sultan organized a splendid reception in the presence of the great emirs and the royal Mamluks, all dressed in sumptuous clothes. After the evening prayer, a thousand candelabras were lit and the three envoys were brought in. All this protocol was intended to impress the Ilkhan's emissaries. The chief emissary charged with delivering the letter was al-Qāḍī Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad. He delivered an eloquent sermon in which he quoted appropriate Qur'ānic verses concerned with peace and harmony among peoples, to the admiration of the throng. The letter, bearing Ghazan Khan's seal and written in Mongolian on a half sheet of Baghdad paper (*nisf qat' al-baghdādī*), was then handed over to the sultan. It was not read that evening, but two days later, on the night of 18 Dhū l-Ḥijja/23 August, in the presence of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, his great emirs and his commanders.

### *An Offer of Peace or an Order to Submit?*

Despite significant differences between them, both versions of the letter emphasize Ghazan Khan's role as the exemplary Muslim. Version B, the longer one, is in part composed on the model of his *firmān* guaranteeing the Damascenes their safety. It is significant that, even in the preamble, the Ilkhan does not address the Mamluk sultan by name: "By the power of God Most High. May peace be upon you!"<sup>58</sup> It is surprising that an official letter, the composition of which was governed by very detailed rules, would omit the addressee's name (*bi-ghayri 'arwān*). In any case, all the sources that transmit version B of the letter state that it was written in Mongolian, that it bore Ghazan Khan's

56 The sources make various mistakes in the list of the *qaḍī's* forbears, but this can be corrected thanks to the numerous biographies of his grandfather 'Allama Abū l-Faṭḥ Mūsā b. Yūnis b. Muhammad al-Mawṣilī who belong to a famous family of Shafi'ite jurists in Mawṣil.

57 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:206; 1:180–182; *Zubdat*, 352; *Kanz* 1X:52–53; *Nihāyat* XXXI:265; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XX:546–549; Maqrīzī 11:440–441; *Nujūm* VIII:135–136.

58 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:212; 1:181; *Kanz* 1X:53; *Beiträge*, 93; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XX:549; *Nujūm* VIII:136.

signature, and that the addressee's name was not mentioned. Perhaps this manner of addressing the Mamluk sultan indicated that he was considered an inferior. As we shall see, another passage in the letter also suggests this. The Ilkhan continues by saying to the sultan that both of them have been honoured by the Islamic religion, but that God has granted him his help to obtain victory, that is, victory over al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad.<sup>59</sup> This passage, at first sight conciliatory in tone, is missing from version A.

The next part of version B recalls the events of Mārdīn. They took place, Ghazan Khan says, by God's decree (*al-qaḍā'*) and decision (*al-qadar*). A Qur'ānic quotation supports this argument and they were caused by nothing but by: "what your own hands earned and for that God is never unjust unto His servants."<sup>60</sup> The infamies committed at Mārdīn are all the more serious, he adds, since they happened during the blessed month of Ramaḍān. They "entered the city, at a time when its people were unheeding."<sup>61</sup>

Version A of the letter begins, after the bismillah, with a warning to the sultan, who this time is cited by name:

Let sultan al-Malik al-Mu'azzam know that what happened was provoked by his armies, the seed of corruption. They committed reprehensible acts in our country through obstinacy against God and against us (*li-'inād Allāh wa 'inādnā*), as at Mārdīn [...]; they fought against God by rebelling [against Him] (*jāhadū Allāh bi-l-ma'āṣi*) [...]; they have attacked the honour of the sharia (*nāmūs al-sharī'a*).<sup>62</sup>

The tone here is obviously more aggressive than in version B. With this line of argument, Ghazan Khan gives his invasion of Syria a religious legitimacy that works neatly in his favour, all the more so as the Mamluk sultan had not troubled himself to punish those responsible for the crimes committed at Mārdīn.

The equivalent section of version B emphasizes Ghazan Khan's role as the guarantor of Islam, it does as in version A, but the religious arguments cited are not as harsh towards the Mamluk sultan. Ghazan Khan has acted for the protection of Islam (*ḥamīyyat al-islām*), and the resounding victory God has granted him over his enemy has made him realize: "He approves not

59 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:212; 1:181; *Kanz* 1x:53; *Beiträge*, 93; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xx:549; *Nujūm* VIII:136.

60 Qur'ān 3:182.

61 Qur'ān 28:15.

62 *Zubdat*, 352; *Niḥāyat* xxxi:265; *Ṣubḥ* VIII:69.

ungratefulness in His servants”<sup>63</sup> and “haster about the Earth, to do corruption there.”<sup>64</sup> The second Qur’ānic citation must be read in the context of the verse as a whole. In this verse those who engage in violence on Earth are also those who make war against God and his Prophet: they will be either killed or crucified, or expelled from the land. We thus find the same accusation as in the beginning of version A, in which Ghazan Khan charges the Mamluk sultan’s armies with waging jihad against God.

In version A of his letter, Ghazan Khan clearly identifies himself with the Prophet Muḥammad and with the pious forebears, in other words with a period considered the golden age of Islam: “We have followed the Prophet’s rules of conduct (*salaknā sunan sayyid al-mursilīn*) and we have chosen the way of the forebears (*āthār al-mutaqaddimīn*).”<sup>65</sup> Ghazan Khan’s decision to come to Syria to avenge the misdeeds done at Mārdīn is sanctioned by a group of *qādī* and trustworthy men to whom he recites the Qur’ānic verse: “So that mankind might have no argument against God, after the Messengers.”<sup>66</sup> In other terms, Ghazan Khan is thus the bearer of a warning from God: he has been sent to announce to mankind the final hour—not the Last Judgement—but the final hour of the Mamluk regime which he holds to be spreading corruption on Earth.

The criticism levelled at al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, backed up with a Qur’ānic quotation, is very harsh: he is accused of having infringed the rights of the civilians who fell under his rule, of having coerced them and of persisting in error: “Do they feel secure against God’s devising? None feels secure against God’s devising but the people of the Lost.”<sup>67</sup> In this part of version A of the letter, Ghazan Khan refers to his second incursion into northern Syria and to the Mamluk troops having “fled before his advance.” He justifies his campaign by reference to al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad’s ill-conduct. Once again, the Ilkhan presents himself as being in the lineage of the prophets: “We never chastise, until we send forth a Messenger.”<sup>68</sup>

Version B of the letter contains another passage which is absent from version A and is telling as to Ghazan Khan’s view of the Mamluk sultan. Although in the rest of the letter he constantly addresses him in the second person plural, here he unexpectedly uses the singular: “And thou, O glorious king

63 Qur’ān 39:7.

64 Qur’ān 5:33.

65 *Zubdat*, 352; *Nihāyat* xxxi:265; *Ṣubḥ* viii:69.

66 Qur’ān 4:165.

67 Qur’ān 7:99.

68 Qur’ān 17:15.

(*al-malik al-jalīl*), thou know that thou and we will be questioned on our misdeeds [...].”<sup>69</sup> With this abrupt descent to the familiar form, Ghazan Khan seems to be belittling the Mamluk sultan. Moreover, while the latter’s name is indeed al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, his political title is *al-sultān*. The use of the term *al-malik* and the switch to the familiar mode of address makes him the writer’s inferior. The conclusion of the letter confirms this hypothesis. Ghazan Khan asks the sultan to send presents to him from Egypt, through the offices of the *qāḍī* of Mawṣil, to prove his sincere desire to make peace (*al-ṣulḥ*) with the Persian Ilkhanate. To round off his treatment of the sultan as a subordinate, he ends the letter by telling him that he will in return send what he finds suitable: in other words, as the sultan’s superior, he will send him whatever he wants.<sup>70</sup> This letter, with its apparently conciliatory tone, is in fact an implicit demand for submission. In the Ilkhanid vocabulary, the only meaning of the term *al-ṣulḥ* was submission to Mongol rule.

The end of version A is largely similar to version B, apart while presents are demanded there is no mention of peace. Then another Qur’anic quotation further disparages the Mamluk regime: “To God belongs the argument conclusive; for had He will, He would have guided you all.”<sup>71</sup> Ghazan Khan advises al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad to give careful attention to his subjects. Then he once again takes on the role of bearer of a warning. The letter concludes with these words:

He [Ghazan Khan] who has threatened is excused (*a’dhdhara man andhara*). He [Ghazan Khan] who has warned is just (*anṣafa man ḥadhdhra*). May peace be upon him who follows the way of Islam.<sup>72</sup>

The theme of warning is very present in the Qur’ān. The *mundhir* is “the one who warns,” while the *nadhīr* is “the one who warns for having himself been forewarned.” These two terms are taken from the root *andhara*, which means, “to warn.” Furthermore, we can observe that the concept of warning is closely related to that of “envoy” (*al-rasūl*). Warning is the method of divine discourse. The prophets are charged with explaining its meaning to men, most often, the coming of Judgment Day and the punishments that will be inflicted upon

69 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:213; 1:183; *Kanz* 1X:55; *Beiträge*, 94; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā’il XX:553; *Nujūm* VIII:136.

70 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:213; 1:183; *Kanz* 1X:55; *Beiträge* 94; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā’il XX:553; *Nujūm* VIII:136.

71 Qur’ān 6:149.

72 *Zubdat*, 353; *Niḥāyat* XXXI:266; *Ṣubḥ* VIII:80–81.

them for their bad behaviour. Any community that has been warned will have no excuse on the last day. With all these scriptural quotations, Ghazan Khan is likened to a prophet in his role as God's warner. What was al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's response to this perfectly well-constructed and religiously well argued text in favor of the Mongol invasion?

The version A of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's letter portrays Ghazan Khan as a paltry Muslim. He does not act in justice for he makes no distinction between "those who deserve punishment" and the others. Here, a Qur'anic quotation illustrates al-Malik al-Nāṣir's comment: "Every soul earns only to its own account; no soul laden bears the load of another."<sup>73</sup>

The Ilkhan is accused of failing to attempt to negotiate peace through emissaries before opening hostilities, as is customary. Once again, a scriptural reference illustrates the comment: "And if they incline to peace, do thou incline to it."<sup>74</sup> This Qur'anic quotation aims to refute Ghazan Khan's argument invoking the verse: "We never chastise, until We send forth a Messenger."<sup>75</sup> Not inspired by God, the Ilkhan is incapable of understanding God's design for him. He boasts about a victory that he claims God granted him when, in truth, it is meant to make him increase his sins out of pride. Divine punishment will be equal to the evil done. Here again, Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's comment is illustrated by a Qur'anic quotation truncated in its beginning and ending, but whose content must be analysed in its entirety in order to understand the reasoning behind it:

[And let not the unbelievers suppose] that indulgence We grant them is better for them; [We grant them indulgence only that they may increase in sin].<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, Ghazan Khan refused to avenge the blood of the Muslims killed by his armies. This behaviour was famously in contradiction to the precepts of Islam:

Man's intention is worth more than his action.<sup>77</sup> What right is there to shed the blood of Muslims? He who raises his hand against a Muslim shall be the enemy of God and His Messenger. He shall be judged: "And

73 Qur'an 6:164.

74 Qur'an 8:61.

75 Qur'an 17:15.

76 Qur'an 3:178.

77 *Nihāyat* XXXI:271; *Subḥ* VII:248.

whoso slays a believer wilfully, his recompense is Gehenna, therein dwelling for ever.”<sup>78</sup>

However, the most virulent attack against Ghazan Khan is about his alliance with Christians. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad reminded him: “Your father and your ancestors in a state of unbelief and discord” (*kāna ajdādu-hūm min al-kufr wa-l-shiqāq*).<sup>79</sup> Now that the Ilkhan had converted to Islam, he should follow another path. He claimed to be coming to the rescue of the Muslim population of Mārdīn, but the Mamluk sultan rejected this justification by accusing Ghazan Khan’s sovereign vassal:

The king of Mārdīn and his subjects have relentlessly exercised the evil that resides within them upon the people and the country. They committed extremely evil deeds.<sup>80</sup>

A fragment of Qur’ānic quotation that implicitly denounces Ghazan Khan’s alliance with the Christians, since the verse is truncated at its beginning and ending:

[O believers take not Jews and Christians as friends; they are friends of each other]. Whoso of you makes them his friends is one of them. [God guides not the people of the evildoers].<sup>81</sup>

Mārdīn, a city in northern Mesopotamia, was in fact the most famous centre of the Western Syriac Church. There were several important monasteries in its environs, such as Dayr al-Za’farān, in the eastern part of the city.<sup>82</sup> According to the Mamluk sultan, the Mārdīn affair was merely a pretext to defend his “*jāhilīyya*” allies.<sup>83</sup> In fact, the Turkoman Artuqid sovereign of the city, al-Malik al-Manṣūr Najm al-Dīn Ghāzī (r. ca. 693–712/1294–1312), had made gifts to the Ilkhan. He had put his own troops at his disposal. However, he had not personally participated in the combats.

78 Qur’ān 4:93.

79 *Nihāyat* XXXI:267; *Ṣubḥ* VII:244.

80 *Nihāyat* XXXI:267; *Ṣubḥ* VII:244.

81 Qur’ān 5:51.

82 Mārdīn was the patriarche siege from 1293 to 1918, see Jean-Marie Fiey, *Pour un Oriens Christianus Novus. Répertoire des diocèses syriaques orientaux et occidentaux* (Beirut, 1993), 233.

83 *Nihāyat* XXXI:268; *Ṣubḥ* VII:244.

Another cause of controversy is mentioned in this text. The Ilkhan should not head toward an Islamic territory with soldiers who practice different religions (*'alā ikhtilāf al-adyān*),<sup>84</sup> nor travel across the pure lands of Islam with adorers of the cross, and his troops should not dishonour the sacrality of Jerusalem.<sup>85</sup> Mamluk chronicles on this expedition in which Ghazan Khan did not participate personally are at times contradictory. Al-Nuwayrī wrote that the Ilkhan did not give the order to go after Mamluk armies for fear of the sultan's tactic aiming to ambush Mongol fighters.<sup>86</sup> However, several contemporary authors claim that fleeing Mamluk armies were pursued.<sup>87</sup> This Ilkhanid raid did indeed take place. Al-Yūnīnī wrote that Mongol troops had sowed corruption, committed pillage and violent acts and taken prisoners in the southern regions of the country (*al-bilād al-qibliyya*).<sup>88</sup> Baybars al-Manṣūrī, one of the great Mamluk emirs of the time declared: "Ghazan Khan sent twenty thousand soldiers with Mulāy. Their raid reached Jerusalem, Hebron, and Gaza where they killed five Muslims in the mosques."<sup>89</sup>

These Christian controversies are also mentioned in version B of the letter, but they are primarily intended to elevate the Mamluk soldiers. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad admitted that his soldiers hesitated to fight Ghazan Khan at first because he was Muslim. Meanwhile, he denounced the Ilkhan's discourse on his true intentions and his intimate faith toward Islam:

Most of our armies [...] believed that his words truly meant what he said. When we were facing each other, most of our troops thought it impossible to have to fight against him: "It is not allowed to fight against Muslims; it is not lawful to kill men who profess this religion that is ours." Because of that hesitation, the soldiers fell behind in combating Ghazan Khan. What happened happened.<sup>90</sup>

We notice here that the Mamluk sultan did not admit defeat and remained vague on the outcome of the battle, although he had fled with the rest of his

84 *Nihāyat* XXXI:268; *Ṣubḥ* VII:244.

85 *Nihāyat* XXXI:268; *Ṣubḥ* VII:244.

86 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Raids into Palestine (A.D. 1260 and 1300)," *JRAS* (1987): 243.

87 Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Raids into Palestine," 243, n. 72.

88 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:153; I:115.

89 *Zubdat*, 343–344. More details in Ibn Abī-l-Faḍā'il XIV:503. Some Persian and Armenian sources give account into this expedition headed by Mulāy, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, "Mongol Raids into Palestine," 245.

90 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:244; I:195; *Kanz* IX:67; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XX:574.

troops. In a way, this sentence is a response to Ghazan Khan's claim about having won a resounding victory with the help of God. However, to enhance the image of the Mamluk sultan, he may have defeated the Mongol armies with a handful of combatants. This "fictitious" victory is illustrated by a famous Qur'anic quotation of biblical origin, often used in matters of combats between opposing armies: "How often a little company has overcome a numerous company [by God's leave!]"<sup>91</sup>

In the Qur'an, this quotation is part of the story of the war that Saul (Tālūt), King of Israel, launched against Goliath (Jālūt) and his infidel people. Thus, al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's letter, in which he credits him with a victory identified as a Biblico-Qur'anic war against pagans, places the Mamluk sultan in a lineage of kings aided by God in their fights against infidel peoples. In this case, Ghazan Khan and his Christian allies.

How were the Mamluk troops shown to advantage to the point of representing the antithesis of the Ilkhan's? Once again, the Mārdīn question is mentioned. As we have seen earlier, this city is the capital of the small Turkoman state of the Artuqids, vassal to the Mongols of Iran. Some Muslims questioned Ibn Taymiyya on the status of this principality. The Hanbali scholar issued a *fatwā* as a response to his coreligionists who were obviously unsure about what stance to take. Should they leave the city and follow the hijra? Yahya Michot has devoted a publication to this *fatwā*.<sup>92</sup> He points out that this *fatwā* has become an "indispensable reference" in political and religious debates, even nowadays.<sup>93</sup> Did this region belong to *balād al-ḥarb* or to *balād al-islām*? Ibn Taymiyya responded: "It is a composite city (*murraḳab*)."<sup>94</sup> He justifies his answer by saying:

If he who resides in [Mārdīn] is unable to practice his religion, then he must emigrate. If this is not the case, then it remains preferable but not mandatory.<sup>95</sup>

In the introduction of the commented translation of this *fatwā*, Yahya Michot settles the text in relation to other writings by Ibn Taymiyya regarding the concept of Hijra. He stresses, however, that it is difficult to date it accurately.

91 Qur'an 2:249.

92 *Mardīn: hégire, fuite du péché et demeure de l'islam*, trans. Yahya Michot (Beirut: Albouraq, 2004).

93 *Mardīn*, 7.

94 *Mardīn*, 67.

95 *Mardīn*, 65–66.



Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyya compiled in a small collection entitled *al-Masā'il al-mārdīniyya* the answers to questions that were posed to him by the Muslims residents of Mārdīn. These questions were related to specific points of Islamic law.<sup>96</sup> We can conclude that this *fatwā* and the collection of questions prove that the status of Mārdīn was a subject of controversy. This is why this city is mentioned by the two opposing camps.

Mamluk soldiers fasted in Mārdīn because they wanted to avoid eating suspicious and forbidden foods.<sup>97</sup> The combatants could not say with any measure of certainty if the food they might buy in a place with many Christian residents was licit. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's soldiers adopted an ascetic model of conduct: they observed food abstinence during the day and spent the night praying to God.<sup>98</sup> Once they realized that Ghazan Khan's intentions were not what he claimed them to be, the Mamluk armies displayed much ardour in combat, so much so that they fought with "the zeal of the combatants in the battle of Badr." This was the first confrontation between the Prophet and the Meccans, and this memorable victory contributed in consolidating his prophetic mission.

Muḥammad's adversaries, much superior in numbers, suffered a complete defeat. Here, the combats that took place in Badr were posited as a paradigm in order to shed a positive light on the exemplary conduct of the Mamluk soldiers toward the Mongols. They were thus being compared with the Muslims who fought against the Prophet's enemies. Like the Prophet, al-Malik al-Nāṣir was aided by God. In fact, this war is mentioned several times in the Qur'ān to prove that God is the one who grants victory to believers.

The behavior of Ghazan Khan, who pretended to be Muslim, is described in absolute contradiction with the prescriptions of Islam for he confronted his Muslim brothers although he had converted to Islam. Additionally, he called to his assistance the Christians, the Georgians, and the Armenians, as well as any person able to ride a horse, "whether he speaks with eloquence or stutters."<sup>99</sup> This sentence probably means that Ghazan Khan formed alliances with Arabs and non-Arabs, the latter possibly designating the Armenians and Georgian who accompanied him in his campaign.

Like in the version A of the letter, al-Malik al-Nāṣir evoked the events that took place in Jerusalem "where they drank wine and ripped off women's veils; where the virgins were raped, and where, those charged with preaching the

96 *Mardin*, 9.

97 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:244; 1:195; *Kanz* 1X:67; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xx:572.

98 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:244; 1:195; *Kanz* 1X:67; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xx:572.

99 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 11:244; 1:195; *Kanz* 1X:67; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xx:573.

sermon at the Holy Sanctuary were reduced to slavery.” Furthermore, crosses had been erected at the top of the tomb of Hebron. Here again, women were violated and the “infidels entered in a state of impurity, drunken with wine.”<sup>100</sup> All these grievances against Mongol troops were a response to what Ghazan Khan had said about the acts perpetrated by Mamluk soldiers in Mārdīn. The idea was to disqualify the adversary by turning the argument around to his own benefit.

The Mamluk’s response to the claims by Ghazan Khan, that he had gone to Syria “to defend Islamic values,” questions the sincerity of his conversion to Islam. His hypocrisy toward the Muslim religion was manifested in his collusion with Christians of all stripes.

As can be seen, while the two versions of Ghazan Khan’s letter present notable differences, there are many similarities in the use of religious arguments and Qur’ānic quotations. Version B’s essential purpose is to emphasize Ghazan Khan’s stature as the perfect Muslim ruler, and it is the less aggressive of the two. Al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, himself a Muslim, is not directly attacked; the criticism is directed at his armies, which he has not been able to control. Version A, by contrast, strikes a very harsh note towards the Mamluk sultan. The reproaches levelled against him are bitter and there is no mention of any common religion uniting the two men. Above all, the verses of the Qur’ān it quotes are chosen to disparage al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad and to connect Ghazan Khan with the line of the prophets. In the Qur’ān, it is the prophets who are charged with warning the peoples of the wrath of God. In this eschatological role, Ghazan Khan can hardly make a peace proposal to the Mamluk sultan: he can only warn him and threaten him with divine punishment in the hope of persuading him to mend his ways. In both versions, the Ilkhan’s letter is clearly a demand for submission. The formulation is different, but the purpose is identical: to place the Mamluk sultanate under the rule of the Persian Ilkhanate.

### Ghazan Khan’s Letters Mongolian Original and Arabic Translations

Our purpose here is not to unravel the problematic question of the authenticity of one version or the other as representing the Mongolian original. I do suggest, however, to recall and consider the arguments put forward by two researchers some decades ago. Hein Horst suggested in 1967 that the two versions were probably written down independently by authors who had heard

100 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo II:245; I:196; *Kanz* IX:68; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā’il XX:576–577.

the letter read out loud.<sup>101</sup> Some years later, in 1973, Thomas Raff held that version B was a Mamluk forgery intended to smooth over Ghazan Khan's aggressive tone, emphasize his desire for peace, and draw attention away from the sultan's retreat to Cairo without having engaged the Mongol troops. More recently, Anne Broadbridge considers that the Ilkhanid and Mamluk letters were forgeries written by scribes of the Mamluk chancellery to denigrate Ghazan and glorify al-Malik al-Nāṣir when they were trying to restore the Sultan's image.<sup>102</sup> In Raff's view version A was a demand for submission and version B a peace proposal.<sup>103</sup> This theory seems to me as unlikely as Horst's is plausible. Thomas Raff was unaware, when he penned his small work, of the existence of version A transmitted by Baybars al-Manṣūrī. This writer, although he composed two chronicles and held positions in the Mamluk chancellery, was also al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's general (*muqaddam alf*). He was the first to transmit version A of this letter. As we have seen, this version is much more damaging to the Mamluk sultan's image than is version B. Only two authors close to the events transmit version A (Baybars al-Manṣūrī and al-Nuwayrī) while four others equally close to the events transmit version B. The two translations must have been made and circulated in the Mamluk sultanate at about the same time, since Baybars al-Manṣūrī (d. 725/1325) has version A and the Syrian historian al-Yūnīnī (d. 726/1325–1326) has version B. These two versions were thus incorporated into the Mamluk chronicles roughly simultaneously. We are probably faced with two different translations of the Mongolian original. Ghazan Khan's envoy, the *qāḍī* Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, may have been the bearer of two letters, one in Mongolian, the other in Arabic, as it was the custom for the letters in Mongolian sent to Latin west which were completed by a Latin translation. In order to check the translation which may have been delivered along with the official letter in Mongolian, the Mongolian original was probably translated in Cairo. We know that the Cairo chancellery employed staff qualified to carry out a translation of this sort, or at any rate capable of acting as interpreters. The phraseology of version A corresponds closely to that of the letters sent by the Great Khans and by the Ilkhans Hülegü and Abaqa. It starts with the ritual introductory formula: "By the power of God Most High [...]; *firmān* of the sulṭān Maḥmūd Ghāzān. Let sulṭān al-Malik al-Mu'azzam know [...]." It should be noted that only version A includes the sultan's name and

101 Hein Horst, "Eine Gesandtschaft des Mamlūken al-Malik an-Nāṣir im İlhān-Hof in Persien," in *Der Orient in der Forschung. Festschrift für Otto Spies*, ed. W. Hoenerbach (Wiesbaden, 1967), 369–370, according to Amitai, "Mongol Imperial Ideology and the Ilkhanid War," 67.

102 Anne Broadbridge, *Kingship and Ideology*, 86.

103 Thomas Raff, *Remarks on an Anti-Mongol Fatwā by Ibn Taimīya* (Leiden, 1973), 34.

the date of composition of the letter. It is therefore possible that this version A was the official translation of the Mongolian original. But given the illustrious role assigned to Ghazan Khan in both documents, it seems to me that version B cannot have been a Mamluk forgery as Thomas Raff supposes. Baybars al-Manṣūrī, who is very favourable towards al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, gives version A, while al-Yūnīnī, who is very harsh towards Ghazan Khan, gives version B. It was in all probability composed in the Persian Ilkhanate, perhaps by the *qāḍī* Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad. Indeed, all the historians who describe the ceremony of the letter's delivery to the sultan greatly stress on the *qāḍī*'s speech, which was peppered with Qur'ānic quotations in favour of peace. But this is only a hypothesis, which I hope may inspire further discussion.

In both versions of Ghazan Khan's letter to al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, his desire to have the Mamluk regime submit to Ilkhanid rule is evident. It was an ambition which arose with the creation of the Persian Ilkhanate. To conclude, we may revisit the letter, dated in mid-Jumādā I 681/22 August 1282, that Tegüder Aḥmad sent to the sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn offering to make peace with him.<sup>104</sup> Having recalled that the hostility between the two powers arose from religion (*bi-ṭariq al-dīn*) and his deeds in support of Islam. And at the end of his letter Tegüder Aḥmad addresses the Mamluk sultan in these terms:

If God grants that the sultan of Egypt choose that which will ensure good order in the world and will put the affairs of the descendants of Adam in [good] order (*wa intiḏām umūr banī Adam*), it is incumbent upon him (*wajaba 'alayhi*) [...] to open the gates of submission and harmony (*abwāb al-ṭā'at wa-l-ittiḥād*) [...] so that these violent troubles may be calmed.<sup>105</sup>

104 Several historians have transmitted this letter. The Syriac historian [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtṣar*, 289–292; Ibn 'Abd al-Zāhir, *Tashrif al-ayyām*, ed M. Kāmil (Le Caire, 1961), 6–10; *Zubdat*, 219–222; *Kanz* VIII:249–254; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XIV:336–346; *Ṣubḥ* VIII:65–68. This diplomatic overture towards Qalāwūn has been examined by Peter Malcom Holt, "The Ilkhān's Embassies to Qalāwūn: Two Contemporary Accounts," *BSOAS* XLIX/1 (1986): 128–132; Adel Allouche, "Tegüder's Ultimatum to Qalawun," *IJMES* XXII/4 (1990): 439–446; J. Pfeiffer, "Aḥmad Tegüder's Second Letter to Qalā'ūn (682/1283)," in *History and Historiography of Post-Mongol Central Asia and the Middle East*, 167–202; Anne Broadbrige, *Kingship and Ideology*, p. 38–44.

105 *Zubdat*, 222; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XIV:345; *Ṣubḥ* VIII:67; [Barhebraeus =] Ibn al-'Ibrī, *Mukhtṣar*, 291; Ibn al-Dawādārī (VIII:253) use plural (*al-ṭā'āt*).

Under cover of offering al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn peace, he is really demanding his submission. Tegüder Aḥmad has no illusions as to the Mamluk sultan's likely reaction to his letter, and adds that if the sultan's suspicious nature prevents him from recognizing the divine favours he has been granted, it is sufficient that God has made it manifest that He has accepted his excuse. The Ilkhan's words are supported by a Qur'ānic quotation: "We never chastise [a people], until we send forth a Messenger."<sup>106</sup> In other words, Tegüder Aḥmad's peace proposal is a warning. Like Ghazan Khan two decades later, he places himself in the line of the prophets who foretell divine punishment. The Ilkhans' conversion to Islam has not in any way altered the political line taken by the Mongol dynasty of Iran towards the Mamluk regime.

### Annex 1

#### *Sources of the amān*

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<b>Author</b>	Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī al-Ba'labakkī al-Ḥanbalī (d. 726/1325–1326)
<b>Profile</b>	A scholar of religious sciences and Syrian historian.
<b>Work</b>	<i>Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography. Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'at al-zamān</i> , ed. and English translation by Li Guo (Leiden, 1998, 2 vols.). Arabic text of <i>amān</i> II:102–104.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	On al-Yūnīnī, see Li Guo 1:6–21; and D. Little, <i>An Introduction to Mamlūk Historiography</i> (Wiesbaden: Frantz Steiner Verlag, 1970), 57–61.
<b>Author</b>	Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347–1348)
<b>Profile</b>	A scholar of religious sciences and Syrian historian.
<b>Work</b>	<i>Ta'rikh al-islām</i> , ed. 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-'arabī, 1421/2000). Text of <i>amān</i> , sub. 699, 75–77.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	On al-Dhahabī, see M. Ben Cheneb-[J. de Somogyi], "al-Dhahabī," <i>EI</i> <sup>2</sup> II:221–222; and D. Little, <i>An Introduction</i> , 61–66.
<b>Author</b>	Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. al-Dawādārī
<b>Profile</b>	Little is known of him; his father was a high-ranking officer; he was an Egyptian historian attached to the Mamluk chancellery.

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106 Qur'ān 17:15.

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Work	<i>Kanz al-durar wa jāmi' al-ghurar</i> , ed. H.R. Roemer (Beirut, 1960). Text of <i>amān</i> IX:20–23.
Bibliographical references	On Ibn al-Dawādārī, see B. Lewis, "Ibn al-Dawādārī," <i>EI</i> <sup>2</sup> III:767; and D. Little, <i>An Introduction</i> , 10–18.
<b>Author</b>	"Author Z"
Profile	Anonymous Egyptian historian; a soldier and a contemporary of al-Malik al-Nāṣir.
Work	Author of a chronicle covering the years 690–709/1291–1310, ed. K.V. Zetterstéén, <i>Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultanat in den Jahren 690–741 der hīgra nach arabischen Handschriften</i> (Leiden: Brill, 1919). Text of <i>amān</i> , 62–64.
Bibliographical references	D. Little, <i>An Introduction</i> , 18–24.
<b>Author</b>	Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī (m. 732/1331–1332)
Profile	Egyptian historian attached to the Mamluk chancellery. He was assigned to Syria to administer the crown properties ( <i>dāwān al-khāṣṣ</i> ). He took part in the defence against Ghazan Khan's third campaign; his stay in Damascus lasted over two years.
Work	<i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i> , ed. Najīb Muṣṭafā Fawwāz and Ḥakīmat Kashāy Fawwāz (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-ʿilmiyya, 1424/2004). Text of <i>amān</i> XXXI:244–245.
Bibliographical references	On al-Nuwayrī, see Mounira Chapoutot Remadi, "al-Nuwayrī," <i>EI</i> <sup>2</sup> VIII:158–162; and D. Little, <i>An Introduction</i> , 24–32.
<b>Author</b>	Al-Mufaḍḍāl b. Abī l-Faḍā'il
Profile	Egyptian Coptic historian of the fourteenth century, of whom little is known. Author of a unique chronicle covering the years 1260–1340, of which only one (probably autograph) manuscript, completed in 1358, exists.
Work	<i>Al-Nahj al-sadīd wa l-durr al-farīd fī-mā ba'd ta'rīkh Ibn al-Amīd</i> , ed. and French translation by E. Blochet ( <i>Patrologia Orientalis</i> : Firmin Didot, Paris, 1920). Text of <i>amān</i> XIV:476–481.
Bibliographical references	On al-Mufaḍḍāl b. Abī l-Faḍā'il, see J. den Heijer, "al-Mufaḍḍāl b. Abī l-Faḍā'il," <i>EI</i> <sup>2</sup> VII:307; and D. Little, <i>An Introduction</i> , 32–38.

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## Annex 2

*Sources of Ghazan Khan's letter*


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<b>Author</b>	Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography. Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'at al-zamān</i> , Arabic text of the letter II:212–214.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Author</b>	Baybars al-Manṣūrī al-Dawādār (m. 725/1325)
<b>Profile</b>	A member of the Mamluke military elite. He was one of al-Malik al-Nāṣir's generals. He also held high positions in the chancellery, which he headed.
<b>Work</b>	<i>Zubdat al-fikra fī ta'rikh al-hijra</i> , ed. D.S. Richards (Beirut: Bibliotheca islamica 42, 1998). Arabic text of the letter, 352–353.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	On Baybars al-Manṣūrī, see D. S. Richards, <i>Zubdat al-fikra</i> , xv–xxv; and D. Little, <i>An Introduction</i> , 4–10.
<b>Author</b>	Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. al-Dawādārī
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Kanz al-durar wa jāmi' al-ghurar</i> , Arabic text of the letter IX:53–56.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Author</b>	“Author Z”
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Beiträge zur Geschichte der Mamlukensultanat</i> , Arabic text of the letter, 93–94.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Author</b>	Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Nihāyat al-arab fī funūn al-adab</i> , Arabic text of the letter, vol. XXXI: 265–7.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1

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<b>Author</b>	Al-Mufaḍḍāl b. Abī l-Faḍā'il
Profile	See Annex 1
Work	<i>Al-Nahj al-sadiḍ wa l-durr al-farīd</i> , Arabic text of the letter XX:549–554.
Bibliographical references	See Annex 1
<b>Author</b>	Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī (m. 821/1418)
Profile	He was trained in the religious sciences, then he became secretary to the Mamluk chancellery in Cairo. He thus had access to primary sources.
Work	<i>Ṣubḥ al-ashā' fī ṣinā'at al-inshā'</i> , éd. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Rasūl Ibrāhīm (Cairo, 1331–38/1913–20). Arabic text of the letter VIII:69–71.
Bibliographical references	On Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī, see C.E. Bosworth, "al-Ḳalkashandī," <i>EI</i> <sup>2</sup> IV:531–533. On the <i>Ṣubḥ al-ashā'</i> , see W. Björkman, <i>Beiträge sur Geschichte der Staatskanzlei im islamischen Ägypten</i> (Hambourg, 1928).
<b>Author</b>	Abū l-Maḥāsin Jamāl al-Dīn Yūsuf b. Taghrī Birdī (m. 874/1469–1470)
Profile	He was a member of the military élite.
Work	<i>Al-Nujūm al-zāhira fī mulūk Miṣr wa l-Qāhira</i> (Cairo). Arabic text of the letter VIII:136–138.
Bibliographical references	On Abū l-Maḥsin b. Taghrī Birdī, see W. Popper, "Abū l-Maḥāsin b. Taghrī Birdī," <i>EI</i> <sup>2</sup> I:142; and D. Little, <i>An Introduction</i> , 87–92.

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## Annex 3

*Sources of a-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's letter*


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<b>Author</b>	Quṭb al-Dīn Mūsā al-Yūnīnī
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Early Mamluk Syrian Historiography. Al-Yūnīnī's Dhayl Mir'at al-zamān</i> , Arabic text of the letter II:243–247.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Author</b>	Sayf al-Dīn Abū Bakr b. al-Dawādārī
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Kanz al-durar wa jāmi' al-ghurar</i> , Arabic text of the letter IX:66–68.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Author</b>	Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Nihāyat al-arab fi funūn al-adab</i> , Arabic text of the letter XXXI:267–272.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Author</b>	Al-Mufaḍḍāl b. Abī l-Faḍā'il
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Al-Nahj al-sadiid wa l-durr al-farīd</i> , Arabic text of the letter XX:571–580.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Author</b>	Shihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad al-Qalqashandī
<b>Profile</b>	See Annex 1
<b>Work</b>	<i>Ṣubḥ al-ashā'</i> . Arabic text of the letter VII:243–250.
<b>Bibliographical references</b>	See Annex 1

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## A Religious Response to Ghazan Khan's Invasions of Syria. The Three "Anti-Mongol" *fatwās* of Ibn Taymiyya

The "anti-Mongol" *fatwās* of Ibn Taymiyya belong to a precise historic context, that of the various attempts made by the Ilkhans to gain control of Syria in the period following the fall of Baghdad. Between 658/1260 and 712/1312–13, the Mongol rulers of Persia would launch six separate campaigns in the region. On the two occasions when they succeeded in briefly occupying Syria, in 658/1260 and 699/1299–1300, the Ilkhans laid the foundations of an administrative system, indicating a longer-term project of incorporating the region into their empire.<sup>1</sup> The first invasion, led by Hülegü, was halted at 'Ayn Jālūt in 658/1260. This defeat did not put an end to the Ilkhans' military initiatives. No official peace having been agreed upon, the deployment of spies (*jāsūs*), skirmishes, and periodic raids by both sides kept alive hostilities between the two states alive. In 680/1281, Abaqā undertook a new attack, which ended in the sultan al-Malik al-Manṣūr Qalāwūn's victory at Ḥimṣ. The latent state of war between the two rival powers was not ended by the conversion of the Ilkhans to Islam, despite the attempt at conciliation made by Tegüder Aḥmad, who sent two embassies to Qalāwūn to announce his desire to end the hostilities, in the name of Islamic unity.<sup>2</sup> Paul Holt has made a somewhat cursory study of this letter but fails to observe that the initiative was intended, despite the Ilkhan's show of good faith, to make the Mamluk sultan his subordinate.<sup>3</sup> The Muslim

\* This chapter is a revised version of a paper published under the title: "The Mongol Invasions of Bilād al-Shām by Ghāzān Khān and Ibn Taymiyya's Three 'Anti-Mongol' Fatwas," *MSR*, 11/2 (2007): 89–120.

1 See Reuven Amitai, "Mongol Provincial Administration: Syria in 1260 as a Case-Study," in *In Laudem Hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, eds. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 117–143.

2 On these embassies, see Peter M. Holt, "The Ilkhān Aḥmad's Embassies to Qalāwūn," 128–132. In 681/1282–1283 Tegüder Aḥmad wrote a letter to Qalāwūn in which he complained that Mamluk spies disguised as *faqīr* had been captured by a Mongol patrol. Although they should have been killed, they had instead been sent back to the sultan as a sign of good will, see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 147.

3 See Adel Allouche, "Tegüder's Ultimatum to Qalawun," *IJMES* 22/4 (1990): 439–446.

Ghazan Khan led three major offensives against Syria. The last Mongol invasion of Mamluk territory was undertaken by Öljeitü during the first weeks of January 1313. These last four Ilkhanid invasions were repelled by the Mamluk sultan al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn, in the last two periods of his reign.<sup>4</sup>

As can be seen, Ghazan Khan's reign did not by any means inaugurate an era of peace. Bilād al-Shām was not the only front in the hostilities that Ghazan Khan opened between the two rival powers; repercussions were also felt in the Hijaz. In 702/1303, when Ghazan Khan was in the Najaf region, just before his last invasion of Syria, he issued a decree in support of the sayyids and guardians of the Ka'ba in which he declared his attachment to the two holy cities. He planned to organise a caravan under the protection of the emir Quṭluḡ-Shāh<sup>5</sup> and a thousand horsemen, which would bear a veil (*sitr*) for the Ka'ba and a decorated *maḥmal* in his name. Twelve gold tomans were to be distributed to the governors of Mecca and Medina as well as to the Arab nobles and tribal shaykhs.<sup>6</sup> Quṭluḡ-Shāh's defeat at Marj al-Şuffar in 702/1303, however, obliged the Ilkhan to renounce these plans.

The Ghazan Khan's occupation of Damascus resulted in a crisis in the city which shed light on numerous forms of social solidarities in it, as has been demonstrated by Reuven Amitai.<sup>7</sup> Here, I propose to analyse the three so-called anti-Mongol *fatwās* issued by Ibn Taymiyya. When read in the context of the historic circumstances in which they were written, these *fatwās* inform us as to Ibn Taymiyya's attitude in face of the danger represented by the Mongol attempts to gain control of Bilād al-Shām. They reveal the Hanbali scholar's view of the Mongol regime as well as his position regarding Shi'ism and certain religious communities in Syria, whom he considered dissidents from Sunni Islam; in other words, these *fatwās* acquaint us with Ibn Taymiyya's thinking at a crucial point in the region's history.<sup>8</sup>

4 On the third reign of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, see Amalia Levanoni, *A Turning Point in the Mamluk History: the Third Reign of Al-Nasir Muhammad Ibn Qalawun (1310–1341)* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

5 In the sources, this person's name appears in two forms: Quṭluḡ-Shāh or Quṭlū-Shāh. Here I have adopted the former, which corresponds to his exact title.

6 Charles Melville, "The Year of the Elephant Mamluk-Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz in the Reign of Abū Sa'īd (1317–1335)," *StIr* 21 (1992): 207.

7 Reuven Amitai, "The Mongol Occupation of Damascus," 21–39. The author studies the cases of the Mamluk Amīr, Sayf al-Dīn Qīpchāq, the governor of the citadel, Arjuwāsh, and a major religious authority of the city, Ibn Taymiyya.

8 The literature concerning the life and works of Ibn Taymiyya is very extensive, see particularly: Henri Laoust, *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques de Takī-d-Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya, canoniste hanbalite né à Ḥarrān en 661/1262, mort à Damas en 728/1328* (Cairo, 1939);

### Sources and Studies

There is no critical edition of Ibn Taymiyya's *fatwās*. The Riyadh edition, published in thirty volumes, is regarded as authoritative today.<sup>9</sup> The three *fatwās* in question are to be found in volume 28 (*Kitāb al-Jihād*).<sup>10</sup> They differ considerably in length. The first is seven pages long,<sup>11</sup> the second is unusually long for a document of this kind with thirty-five pages,<sup>12</sup> and the third is eight pages long.<sup>13</sup> It is possible, on the basis of the content of the *fatwās*, which include numerous references to historic events attested in the chronicles, as well as the names of persons and places, to give an approximate date for the three documents. As is shown below, the order in which they appear in the Riyadh edition does not correspond to the chronological order in which they were issued.

Despite their interest, these three *fatwās* have not been the subject of many studies. The first reference to Ibn Taymiyya's anti-Mongol *fatwās* appears in Henri Laoust's *Essai sur les doctrines sociales et politiques d'Ibn Taymiyya*, published in 1939. Laoust uses various passages from the *fatwās* to illustrate the thinking of their author, but without engaging in their systematic study.<sup>14</sup> Thomas Raff's short monograph, published in a very limited edition, dates

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"La biographie d'Ibn Taimīya d'après Ibn Kathir," *BEO* 9 (1943): 115–162; Victor Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah's Ethics: The Social Factor*, American Academy of Religion Academy Series no. 34 (Chicago, 1983); Caterina Bori, *Ibn Taymiyya: una vita esemplare. Analisi delli fonti classiche sella sua biografia* (Pise-Rome: Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2003); Jon Hoover, *Ibn Taymiyya's Theodicy of Perpetual Optimism. Islamic Philosophy* (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2007); Baber Johansen, "A Perfect Law in an Imperfect Society. Ibn Taymiyya's Concept of 'Governance in the Name of the Sacred Law,'" in *The Law Applied. Contextualizing the Islamic Shari'a. A Volume in Honor of Frank E. Vogel*, eds. P.J. Bearman, W.P. Heinrichs and B.G. Weiss (London & New York: Tauris, 2008), 259–293; Emmanuel Fons, "À propos des Mongols. Une lettre d'Ibn Taymiyya au sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn," *Annales islamologiques* 43 (2009): 31–73.

9 *Majmū' fatāwā Shaykh al-Islām Aḥmad ibn Taymiyyah*, ed. 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad b. Qāsim al-Najdī al-Ḥanbalī (Riyadh and Mecca, 1381–86/1961–67, repr. 1417/1995).

10 *Majmū' fatāwā* XXVIII:501–552.

11 *Majmū' fatāwā* XXVIII:501–508.

12 *Majmū' fatāwā* XXVIII:509–543.

13 *Majmū' fatāwā* XXVIII:544–551. Partial French translation by Jean Michot, "Textes spirituels d'Ibn Taymiyya. Mongols et Mamlûks: l'état du monde musulman vers 709/1310," *Le Musulman* 24 (October. 1994): 26–31; *Le Musulman* 25 (January 1995): 25–30; *Le Musulman* 26 (September 1995): 25–30; these translations are available on line (<http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/it/index.html>).

14 Henri Laoust, *Essai*, 63–65 (the Mongol danger); 117–123 (the struggle against the Tatars); 368–369 (the jihad).

from 1973.<sup>15</sup> The writer presents the historic context in which Ibn Taymiyya's action took place, and then proposes an analysis of the second *fatwā*, long extracts from which he translates into English. Thomas Raff assumes that the *fatwā* was issued shortly before the battle of Marj al-Şuffar (2 Ramaḍān 702/20 April 1303): "Ibn Taimiya devoted his efforts to inciting the fanaticism of Mamluk troops for the crucial day, i.e. the Battle of Marj al-Şuffar, by making exhortations to them and even participating in the combat himself."<sup>16</sup> Thomas Raff's analysis, which is not thematically structured, is at times somewhat confused. In addition, he commits some errors of interpretation regarding the Mongol culture and political regime that Ibn Taymiyya denounces. His study's principal aim is to present the Hanbali scholar as a fervent partisan of jihad, when in fact, as we shall see, his position was a far more subtle one, arising from the circumstances the people of Damascus were faced with due to the state of war. Jean Michot addressed the issue of these *fatwās*, especially the second one, in his translation of Ibn Taymiyya's *Letter to a Crusader King*, and in a twenty-page article, both published in 1995.<sup>17</sup> We are grateful to Jean Michot for having established the correct reading of a defective spelling, something Thomas Raff has failed to do. This reading allows us to understand a passage of the second *fatwā* which had until then remained obscure: "*aḥkām al-mushrikīn—kanā'is<sup>an</sup>—wa-jankhishkḥān malik.*" Jean Michot demonstrates that the word *kanā'is<sup>an</sup>* is in fact a corruption of *ka-yāsa*, the manuscript form of which is very similar.<sup>18</sup> This renders the phrase comprehensible: "that which, of the rules of the associationists (*aḥkām al-mushrikīn*)—such as the *yāsa* (*ka-yāsa*) of Genghis Khan, king of the polytheists—is most gravely contrary to the religion of Islam."<sup>19</sup> This reference to the *yāsā* enables us to understand Ibn Taymiyya's argument when he refutes the political regime of the Mongols and their version of Islam.

15 Thomas Raff, *Remarks on an Anti-Mongol Fatwā by Ibn Taimiyya* (Leiden, 1973).

16 Thomas Raff, *Remarks*, 4.

17 *Lettre à un roi croisé*, ed. and trans. Jean Michot, (Leuven/Lyon, 1995); "Un important témoin de l'histoire et de la société mameloukes à l'époque des Ilkhans et de la fin des croisades: Ibn Taymiyya," in *Egypt and Syria in the Fatimid, Ayyubid and Mamluk Eras*, eds. U. Vermeulen and D. de Smet (Leuven, 1995), 335–353.

18 See the clever reading of this passage in Jean Michot, "Un important témoin," 346.

19 *Majmū' fatāwā* xxviii:530.

## The Mongols, the New Dissidents of Islam

### *The fatwās and the Status of the Fighters*

The context is one of war. The principal objective of Ibn Taymiyya's three *fatwās* is, *a priori*, to determine the status of the soldiers who were fighting in the armies of both sides. In 658/1260, when Hülegü attempted to seize Syria, fighting his soldiers did not pose any particular legal problem as the Mongols were at that time considered infidels. It was a question of repelling invaders who, like the Christian Franks, sought to capture a part of the Islamic territory. Jihad against the invaders was entirely legitimate. But when, forty years later, Ghazan Khan attacked Bilād al-Shām, most of his soldiers were converts to Islam like himself. The Muslims who came to Ibn Taymiyya in search of a legal opinion did not know what stance to adopt towards this new kind of aggressor: what did the Imams have to say about these Tatars (i.e., the Mongols) who were advancing towards Syria, given that they had pronounced the two declarations of faith (*shahādātayn*), claimed to follow Islam, and had forsaken the unbelief (*al-kufr*) which they had initially professed? In their ranks were Mamluk prisoners who fought against their Muslims brothers under duress; what was to be done? The Tatars were Muslims like the Mamluks; what was the status of the Mamluk soldier who refused to fight? What was the status of the Mamluk soldiers who had voluntarily joined the ranks of the Tatars?

Ibn Taymiyya was well aware of the danger that Ghazan Khan's attacks represented, not just from the military point of view but most of all, because many Muslims did not understand why they should fight against Muslim armies whose leader enjoyed great prestige. He had officially converted before becoming Ilkhan, he treated his Persian subjects well, and he came to Syria in order to put an end to the tyrannical rule of a military caste. Ibn Taymiyya's fears were also expressed by the sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad in his reply in Muḥarram 701/September 1301 to a letter that Ghazan Khan had sent him in Dhū l-Ḥijja 700/August 1301.<sup>20</sup> The sultan accused his correspondent of stressing his conversion to Islam only to gain a tactical advantage, and lamented that the majority of the heroic troops (that is, the Mamluks) believed his conversion was sincere, and thus were refusing to fight him.<sup>21</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya's answer to those who sought his opinion on the matter was decisive: the Mongols must be fought, just like all the groups whom it is lawful to fight. He defines these groups in his three *fatwās*. All of Ibn Taymiyya's arguments are aimed at bringing the Mongols within the scope of one of these

20 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:181–184, 11:212; Ibn Abi l-Faḍā'il xx:1:571–580.

21 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:195, 11:224; Ibn Abi l-Faḍā'il xx:574.

categories. Some of the groups that must be fought are classified as *bughāt*, a term which in the early years of Islam designated those who rebelled against legitimate authority.<sup>22</sup> Ibn Taymiyya also includes in the category of groups to be fought those who fail to perform any one of the requirements of Islam, such as the performance of the five canonical prayers, the payment of legally-required tax (*al-zakāt*), fasting (*al-ṣawm*) and the pilgrimage to Mecca (*al-hājj*). Those who do not take part in jihad against the infidels (*al-kuffār*)<sup>23</sup> in order to subdue them and pay the poll-tax (*al-jizya*) must also be fought. Those who engage in adultery (*al-zinā*) and the consumption of fermented drinks (*al-khamar*) must be harshly repressed as they contravene the divine order. These last two acts fall into the category of offences canonically sanctioned by the Qurʾān (*ḥudūd Allāh*). Also amongst the groups that must be fought are those who do not order good and forbid evil (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*), since for Ibn Taymiyya this duty is another form of jihad.<sup>24</sup> In the second *fatwā*, Ibn Taymiyya includes in the category of groups that must be fought those who deny the free will of God (*al-qadar*),<sup>25</sup> his decree (*al-qaḍāʾ*), his names, or his attributes, as well as those who display innovation (*al-bidʿa*) contrary to the Qurʾān and the Sunna, those who do not follow the path of the pious forebears (*al-salaf*), and an entire assemblage of Muslim religious movements which Ibn Taymiyya considered deviant with regard to scriptures and to the consensus of scholars in the religious sciences. As can be seen, this definition of the groups to be fought is a very broad one. Ibn Taymiyya takes the view that every community which is a cause of disorder on the Earth (*fisq*)<sup>26</sup> must

22 The term *bughāt* also refers to those who overstep the limits in following their own interpretations of the canonical texts. It is not permitted to fight them without having first attempted to bring them back to the straight and narrow. According to Ibn Kathīr, at the time of Ghazan Khan's third attempt to conquer Syria, the feelings of Damascus' population towards the Mongols were the same, see Henri Laoust, "La biographie d'Ibn Taimīya d'après Ibn Kathīr," 131.

23 In the Qurʾān, the term *kāfir* (plural, *kuffār*) designates: "Those who disbelieve in that which We have given to them"; see Qurʾān 30:34. A more general use of the word to mean "infidel" subsequently became very common. Generally speaking, a *kāfir* is one who rejects a true message although knowing it to be true, whether he is polytheist, Jewish, Christian, or indeed Muslim; see Walther Björhman, "Kāfir," *EI*<sup>2</sup> IV:425–427.

24 In his theory of jihad Ibn Taymiyya notes that the Kharijites called themselves *ahl al-daʿwa*; see Henri Laoust, *Essai*, 362–363.

25 This refers to the theologians who proclaim the principle of God's free will; see Josef van Ess, "Kādirīyya," *EI*<sup>2</sup> IV:384–388.

26 On Ibn Taymiyya's conception of grievous (*fisq*), see Henri Laoust, *Essai*, 190, 260, 313, 421, 455, n. 4.

be fought, on the basis of the principle that disorder is to be more feared than death; the public manifestation of heresy is thus to be more rigorously fought against and punished than silent heresy.<sup>27</sup>

The composition of Ghazan Khan's armies particularly inspired Ibn Taymiyya's anger. In their ranks, he writes, fight infidels (*al-kuffār*), polytheists (*al-mushrikūn*) and Christians. The Mongol armies were indeed made up of elements of various origins. They included Christians such as Armenians and Georgians, as well as Muslim soldiers who, serving local sovereigns (the sultans of Rūm and Bilād al-Shām's principalities), had no choice but to join the Mongol war machine. Reuven Amitai, however, has shown that these forces played only a secondary role in comparison to that of the original Turkic-Mongol troops from Inner Asia.<sup>28</sup> Ibn Taymiyya criticizes the make-up of Ghazan Khan's armies for what was, in his eyes, an even more serious reason. Side by side with the Mongol soldiers fought Mamluk emirs and troops who had voluntarily joined the ranks of the invaders. Ibn Taymiyya considered them apostates, who must be made pay the prescribed penalty.

The Mongol ranks included a certain number of renegade Mamluks (*al-munazzifūn*), led by the former governor of Damascus, Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq al-Manṣūrī (d. 701/1310–11).<sup>29</sup> In 1298, at the end of the reign of Sultan al-Manṣūr Lāchīn (1296–1299),<sup>30</sup> news of a new Mongol attack on Syria reached Cairo. A group of high-ranking Mamluk emirs, led by Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq, fled along with their men to the Persian Ilkhanate, hoping thereby to escape the order for their arrest issued by Mengü Temür al-Ḥusāmī, al-Manṣūr Lāchīn's *nā'ib* in Damascus. Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq and his emirs were well received upon their arrival in Ilkhanid territory, and were immediately sent to Ghazan Khan's court where the Ilkhan received them in person. Sums of money were paid to them in accordance with their military rank, and they were given Mongol women in marriage. Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq married the sister of one of Ghazan Khan's wives. He and the Mongol emir Quṭlugh-Shāh led the troops at the battle of Wādī al-Khaznadār in north of Ḥimṣ. The new Mamluk soldiers helped Ghazan

27 Henri Laoust, *Essai*, 364, n. 2.

28 On Ilkhanid armies, see Reuven Amitai, "Whither the Ilkhanid Army? Ghāzān's First Campaign into Syria (1299–1300)," 223–225.

29 Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq had been captured in the battle of Elbistan in 1276, and was subsequently enlisted among the mamluks of Qalāwūn; see Reuven Amitai-Preiss, *Mongols and Mamluks*, 174, n. 68. He was governor of Damascus from 697/1297 to 698/1298; see his biography in Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, *Durar* 111:213–215.

30 Peter M. Holt, "The Sultanate of Manṣūr Lāchīn (696–8/1296–9)," *BSOAS* 3/6 (1973): 521–532.



Khan gain victory on 27 Rabīʿ I 699/22 December 1299.<sup>31</sup> At the beginning of Rabīʿ II 699/late December 1299, shortly before the Mongol armies entered Damascus, Ibn Taymiyya went to meet Ghazan Khan with a delegation of Damascene notables. There he saw the Mamluk renegades in the enemy army, which may explain his bitterness towards them.

In the second *fatwā*, the list of those who must be fought due to their collusion with the Mongols is longer and somewhat different. Apart from non-believers of all kinds (*al-kuffār*, *al-mushrikūn*, *al-fussāq*, etc.) and the Mamluk renegades, he cites various categories which do not appear in the other two *fatwās*. He denounces persons ranking amongst “the worst of the innovators,” such as the Rāfiḍī (i.e. the Twelver Shiʿites), whose heresies have been influenced by those who are amongst “the worst of all creatures: the freethinkers (*al-zindīq*, plural *al-zanādiqa*), hypocrites, who do not inwardly believe in Islam.”<sup>32</sup> Ibn Taymiyya considered that the *zanādiqa* weakened Sunni Islam by divulging the heresies uttered by the Shiʿites.<sup>33</sup> Amongst the dissenting Muslims who must be fought, Ibn Taymiyya cites the extremist Shiʿites (*ghulāt al-shiʿa*), in other words the Ismāʿīliyya and Nuṣayriyya of Syria.<sup>34</sup> The Jahmiyya<sup>35</sup> and the Ittihādiyya, believers in mystical union (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) and disciples of

31 On the ambiguous role Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq played during this battle, see Reuven Amitai, “The Mongol Occupation of Damascus,” 25.

32 *Majmūʿ fatāwā* XXVIII:520.

33 Henri Laoust, *Essai*, 366.

34 This was an extreme Shiʿite sect in Syria and southern Turkey, named after Muḥammad b. Nuṣayr al-Fihri al-Numayrī, a disciple of the tenth or eleventh Twelver imam; see Shahrastānī, *Le livre des religions et des sectes*, trans. Daniel Gimaret and Guy Monnot (Paris, 1986), 542, n. 255. Henri Laoust (*Essai*, 124–125) refers to this text. This *fatwā* was edited and translated into French by M.S. Guyard, “Le fetwa d’Ibn Tamiyyah sur les Nosairis,” *JA* 18 (1871): 158–198. It was issued after the raid by Baybars on the Ismāʿīliyya fortresses in Syria; see Heinz Halm, “Nuṣayriyya,” *EI*<sup>2</sup> VIII:148–150. As Yaron Friedman points out, Ibn Taymiyya confuses the Nuṣayriyya and the Ismāʿīliyya in this *fatwā*, no doubt because in the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Nizārī branch of the Ismāʿīliyya had taken over a number of fortresses in the mountains where the Nuṣayriyya lived, the Jabal Anṣariyya; see Yaron Friedman, “Ibn Taymiyya’s Fatāwā Against the Nuṣayri-ʿAlawī Sect,” *Der Islam* 82/2 (2005): 353. It is the only branch of the *ghulāt* still in existence, see Kais M. Firro, “The ʿAlawīs in Modern Syria: From Nuṣayriyya to Islam via ʿAlawīya,” *Der Islam* 82/1 (2005): 1–31.

35 Jahm b. Safwān (d. 128/746) is the presumed founder of the Jahmiyya sect. From the doctrinal point of view, they held that the Qurʾān had been created, and denied the existence of the attributes of God. They are known primarily from the works of their critics, such as the Hanbalis, foremost among them Ibn Taymiyya, who associates them with the Qādiriyya and the Muʿtazila, see Montgomery Watt, “Djahmiyya,” *EI*<sup>2</sup> II:398–399.

Ibn 'Arabī and Ibn Sab'īn,<sup>36</sup> are designated as *ahl al-bid'a*. In this second *fatwā*, the Ilkhan's Christian allies are omitted from the list of groups to be fought although they are denounced in the other two *fatwās*. It may be supposed that in drawing up this long *fatwā*, Ibn Taymiyya's objective was to set out his view of the Mongol regime, which he saw as undermined by Shi'ite subversion, and to denounce Syria's Muslim sects, against whom he was engaged in a relentless struggle because he considered them a danger to Sunni Islam.

### *Jihad against the Mongols from the Legal Point of View*

In order to justify the practice of jihad against Muslim invaders, Ibn Taymiyya relies on the Qur'ān and the Sunna of the Prophet, but he also sought historical events from the early years of Islam which could serve as paradigms to support his argument. A case in point was the reign of the fourth caliph, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib. It was during this period that the first great sedition (*al-fitna*) in the history of the Islamic community took place: the Battle of the Camel in December 656 and the Battle of Şiffin in July 657 which in turn led to the emergence of the Kharijites. The precedents established by these famous battles enabled the Hanbali scholar to draw a distinction between different kinds of rebellion against the authority of the caliph.

Ibn Taymiyya links those rebels, who introduced sedition into the Islamic community in its early years, with the events taking place in his time. Islam was being shaken by these new Muslims whose political ideology permitted them to strike deals with Christians, the heretic sects of Islam, and the Shi'ites. Ibn Taymiyya's principal grievance with the Mongols of Iran was their collusion with—in his view—all these infidels. He uses this as the basis for justifying jihad against those who declare that it is permitted "to kill the best of the Muslims."<sup>37</sup> Since Bilād al-Shām was the scene of a new *fitna*, he reasons, the Qur'ānic prescription must be followed: "And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for God."<sup>38</sup>

The battles which took place during 'Alī's reign allowed Ibn Taymiyya to draw a distinction between the different internal conflicts suffered by the young Muslim community. Scholars in the field of religious science had not come to any consensus as to the position to take regarding the adversaries in the battles of the Camel and Şiffin. The believers were free to side with either camp. The Battle of the Camel, which set 'Alī against 'Ā'isha, had seen several of the Companions of the Prophet, including Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, take the side

36 On this personage, see A. Faure, "Ibn Sab'īn," *EI*<sup>2</sup> III:945–946.

37 *Majmū' fatāwā* XXVIII:505.

38 Qur'ān 2:193.

of his widow and as it happened, the battle came to an end with the death of those two Companions. At the moment of confrontation between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, there were those who protested against human arbitration between the two parties, citing the Qur'ānic verse: "And if two parties of believers fall to fighting, then make peace between them. And if one party of them doeth wrong to the other, fight ye that which doeth wrong till it return unto the ordinance of God."<sup>39</sup> Conversely, Ibn Taymiyya states, there was indeed consensus among the believers to support 'Alī in his struggle against the Kharijites. Among their ranks there was no Companion of the Prophet. Since they called for obedience to the prescriptions of the Qur'ān, they could not be excluded from the Islamic community. However, they asserted what it was not permitted, that part of the Sunna of the Prophet contradicted the Book of God. Ibn Taymiyya's reasoning is straightforward: since the *ijmā'* of the scholars called for the Kharijites to be fought, it was all the more legitimate to pursue jihad against the Mongols who, while adhering to the laws of Islam, continued to follow the prescriptions of Genghis Khan.

At the top of the hierarchy of the groups to be fought within the army of Ghazan Khan are the Mamluk renegades. Ibn Taymiyya relies on the position of the forebears, who at the beginning of Abū Bakr's caliphate called apostates those who refused to pay the *zakāt*, even though they fasted, prayed, and did not fight against the Muslim community. Ibn Taymiyya recalls that according to the Sunna of the Prophet, the penalty set out for the apostate (*al-murtadd*) is harsher than that which applies to those who are unbelievers (*al-kāfir al-aṣlī*). The apostate must be put to death, even if he is incapable of fighting, whereas many jurists do not decree the execution of the unbeliever.<sup>40</sup>

The question of the Mamluk prisoners who were forced to fight in Ghazan Khan's army was a delicate point for Ibn Taymiyya. Many Muslims were unsure as to whether it was justifiable to kill Mongol soldiers who were Muslims, or worse still, their Mamluk brothers who had been taken prisoner and impressed into the enemy army. Here too, Ibn Taymiyya refers to the outstanding events of the first centuries of Islam. He uses the Prophet's first great battle against the Meccans, that of Badr in 624, to justify jihad against Ghazan Khan's soldiers. During this famous battle, a Companion of the Prophet and several of his followers were taken prisoner. Ibn Taymiyya considers that, as at Badr, if the Mamluk prisoners fighting in the Mongol army are killed in battle, they will be considered martyrs for God's cause.

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39 Qur'ān 49:9.

40 *Majmū' fatāwā* XXVIII:524.

As can be seen, Ibn Taymiyya uses the classic procedures of reasoning by analogy in his argument to justify jihad against the Muslim Mongols, transposing to his own time the known cases of *fitna* that had pitted different groups of Muslims against one another. By virtue of this relatively simple argumentation, the Hanbali sage establishes a typology of *bughāt* that must be fought, in order to convince those Muslims who were still hesitating to take up arms to repel Ghazan Khan's armies. The Mongols are likened to the Kharijites, while the renegade Mamluks are relegated to an even worse status, that of apostates.

### A Tract Against the Mongol Regime

Ibn Taymiyya had numerous contacts with the Mongol authorities, which he reports in his *fatwās*. His claims are borne out by the historic sources, which give many details on the matter. These contacts are undoubtedly the source of his information on the Ilkhanid political regime and various aspects of Mongol culture. Ibn Taymiyya did not have the opportunity of a long conversation with Ghazan Khan; he met the Ilkhan briefly when, accompanied by a group of religious figures from Damascus, he went to meet him on 7 Rabi' II 699/1st January 1300 to ask him to spare the lives of the city's civilian population (that is, to grant them his *amān*).<sup>41</sup> Contemporary historiography has maintained that this was the only occasion on which Ibn Taymiyya met Ghazan Khan.<sup>42</sup> Jean Michot, in 1995, drew attention to the fact that the two might have met again subsequently and suggested that the question deserved to be studied.<sup>43</sup> He based this on the evidence of the Ilkhan's minister Rashīd al-Dīn, who reports a meeting between them which supposedly took place on 9 Rabi' II 699/3 January 1300 at the Ilkhan's encampment at Marj al-Rāhiṭ. The Mongol sovereign asked his visitors: "Who am I?" They replied as one, listing his genealogy as far back as Genghis Khan. In reply to his question as to the name of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad's father, they said, "al-Alfi."<sup>44</sup> The Mongol sovereign then asked them the name of the father of "al-Alfi," a question which the Damascene

41 The interview took place in the village of Nabk, near the Ilkhan's camp at Marj al-Rāhiṭ, see al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:138–139, 11:101–102; *Kanz* IX:20; *Beiträge*, 66. A detailed account of the meeting is given in Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il XI V:3:475. The interpreter reported Ghazan Khan's words to the delegation of notables, informing them that the *amān* they had come to ask for had already been sent to Damascus before their request.

42 Henri Laoust, *Essai*, 117–120; Thomas Raff, *Remarks*, 20–24.

43 *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 75, n. 125.

44 Rashīd al-Dīn, *Ta'rikh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 128.

notables were unable to answer. Ghazan Khan's noble lineage thus could not be compared with the ancestry of al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn al-Alfi, that is, the son of a Turkic slave, with no noble lineage.<sup>45</sup> By establishing Ghazan Khan's prestigious *nasab* in contrast to that of the Mamluk sultan, Rashīd al-Dīn clearly sought to elevate the Ilkhan's prestige in the eyes of the Damascene delegation. This lack of lineage was proof that the Mamluk regime was a mere product of chance, devoid of any right to rule.<sup>46</sup> Given that the Mamluk sources do not mention this meeting between Ghazan Khan and Ibn Taymiyya, one may question whether it in fact took place. Rashīd al-Dīn might have confused Ibn Taymiyya's meeting with Ghazan Khan with the discussions between the scholar held and various Ilkhanid authorities, such as his interview with the great emir Qutluḡ-Shāh which took place after Ghazan Khan's withdrawal from Damascus. Indeed, in his second *fatwā* Ibn Taymiyya remarks that a Mongol leader addressed him, saying: "Our king is the son of a king, the son of seven generations of kings, while your king is the son of a client."<sup>47</sup>

Jean Michot assumed that the bulk of the exchanges between Ibn Taymiyya and Ghazan Khan occurred in the course of the interview Rashīd al-Dīn relates between these two great figures of the age. Michot based his hypothesis on a later writer, Ibn Yūsuf al-Karamī al-Marī (d. 1033/1624), who reports the explicit evidence given by the Syrian historian Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347–1348) to the effect that the Hanbali scholar had two meetings with the Ilkhan.<sup>48</sup>

Caterina Bori has recently edited and translated a short biography of Ibn Taymiyya which had hitherto remained unpublished.<sup>49</sup> This work, written by Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī, clearly attests that Ibn Taymiyya met the Ilkhan a second time: "in the times of Ghazan Khan [...], he (i.e. Ibn Taymiyya) did not remain at rest, but rose and went out, meeting the king twice (*ijtima'a bil-malik marratayn*)."<sup>50</sup> As Bori notes, Shams al-Dīn al-Dhahabī's remarks as to Ibn Taymiyya's activity refer to the third invasion of Syria and the famous battle of Marj al-Ṣuffar (2 Ramadan 702/20 April 1303) in which the Ilkhanid army was defeated.<sup>51</sup> Ibn Taymiyya took part in this battle, bearing arms and urging the combatants to engage in jihad. During the fighting he issued a

45 The term "al-Alfi" refers to the fact that the sultan Qalāwūn had been bought for a sum of one thousand dinars. Rashīd al-Dīn thus emphasizes that the Mamluk sultans, of servile origin, had in the beginning been mere chattel, *Ta'rikh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 128.

46 Rashīd al-Dīn, *Ta'rikh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 128.

47 *Majmū' fatāwā* xxviii:542.

48 *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 75–76, n. 125.

49 Caterina Bori, "A New Source for the Biography of Ibn Taymiyya," *BSOAS* 67/3 (2004): 321–348. The manuscript is preserved in the Maktabat al-Asad in Damascus (Majmū' 3128).

50 Caterina Bori, "A New Source," 343.

51 Caterina Bori, "A New Source," 343, n. 29.

*fatwā* exempting the Mamluk soldiers from the ritual fast during the month of Ramaḍān.<sup>52</sup> Given the circumstances of Ibn Taymiyya's meetings with Ghazan Khan, he can hardly have had the opportunity to engage in a long conversation. The Ilkhan was not present at this battle. Ibn Taymiyya did, however, have closer contacts with Ghazan Khan's two great emirs, Qutluḡ-Shāh and Mulāy (d. 707/1307),<sup>53</sup> and with various major figures of the Ilkhanid state, including the viziers Sa'd al-Dīn and Rashīd al-Dīn and other important persons<sup>54</sup> such as the Armenian king of Sis.<sup>55</sup> The historical sources report many details of Ibn Taymiyya's encounters with Qutluḡ-Shāh, which took place on 21 Jumādā 1 699/14 February 1300,<sup>56</sup> and the emir Mulāy, when Ibn Taymiyya visited him in his tent and negotiated the release of numerous prisoners.<sup>57</sup> On this occasion he had a discussion with the emir about the murder of al-Ḥusayn, the grandson of the Prophet, by Yazīd b. Mu'āwiya on the 10 Muḥarram 61/10 October 680. Not wishing to displease Mulāy, Ibn Taymiyya was reserved in giving his views on this topic.<sup>58</sup> Ibn Taymiyya's information on the Mongol regime was undoubtedly based on the discussions he had with important figures in the Ilkhanid state rather than on the conversations he may have had with Ghazan Khan.

From a reading of these *fatwās*, it appears that Ibn Taymiyya was well-informed as to the political views of the Ilkhans, but he interprets them according to his own interpretative system—that of the rigorist Islam he

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- 52 The fast had begun on 1st Ramaḍān 702/19 April 1303, on the eve of the battle. Ibn Taymiyya relied on a hadith of the Prophet dating from the year of the conquest of Mecca to excuse the combatants from the ritual fast; see Henri Laoust, "La biographie d'Ibn Taymiyya d'après Ibn Kaṭīr," 132.
- 53 The name of this figure appears in different forms in the Arab sources consulted. Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo gives it in the form Būlāhim or Būlāy, 1:163–164, 11:124; *Beiträge*, 78–79: Būlāy; *Kanz* 1x:36: Bulāy; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xiv:504–505: Mūlāy; Rashīd al-Dīn, *Tārīkh-i Mubārak-i Ghāzānī*, 130: Mūlāy.
- 54 According to al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo (1:158, 11:119), those present included: the treasurer Sharīf Quṭb al-Dīn and his secretary (*al-mukātib*) Ṣadr al-Dīn, Najīb al-Kaḥḥāl al-Yahūdī, the *shaykh al-mashā'ikh* Nizām al-Dīn Maḥmūd, and the *nāzir al-awqāf* Aṣīl al-Dīn b. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī.
- 55 On this interview, see al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo (1:157–158, 11:119).
- 56 'Alam al-Dīn al-Birzālī recorded the testimony of Ibn Taymiyya on 25 Jumādā 699/19 February 1300, see al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo (1:157, 11:119).
- 57 He went to his camp on 2 Rajab 699/24 March 1300 and returned to Damascus on 4 Rajab/26 March, see al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:163–164, 11:124; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-islām*, sub 699, 377.
- 58 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:163–164, 11:124; *Kanz* 1x:36; *Beiträge*, 78–79; al-Dhahabī, *Ta'rikh al-islām*, sub 699, 379; Ibn Abī l-Faḍā'il xiv:668–669.

symbolised—and from a polemical perspective. Ghazan Khan, in his three attacks on Syria, was continuing the policy of his predecessors Hülegü and Abaqa, but he portrayed his arrival in Bilād al-Shām as being in the name of Islam.

### *Ghazan Khan, Leader of the Muslim World*

Following his official conversion to Islam, Ghazan Khan wished to present himself as leader of the eastern Muslim world. Some Persian sources adopt millenarian motives in dealing with his conversion. He is depicted as renewing Islam, while the great emir Nawrūz, who had encouraged him to convert, is described as a second Abū Muslim.<sup>59</sup> After the Abbasid conquest of Syria and Egypt, Abū Muslim wanted to put an end to the curses uttered against the family of the Prophet.<sup>60</sup> The famous Iranian theologian Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḏāwī, in his *Niẓām al-tawārikh*,<sup>61</sup> also highlights the figure of the Ilkhan after his conversion to Islam: “Ghazan Khan has rendered obsolete the bravery of Rustam, the generosity of Ḥātīm al-Ṭāī, and the justice of Anūshīrwān.” As Charles Melville quite rightly notes: “Ghazan Khan puts a seal on these separate strands of Irano-Islamic history.”<sup>62</sup> Ghazan Khan also had black banners made, resembling those of the Abbasid Caliphs, and made Christians and Jews pay the poll tax (*al-jizya*), from which they had been free since the abolition of the caliphate.<sup>63</sup> The Ilkhan intended, by this series of symbolic actions, to show himself as leader of the Muslim community. One can even see in the coupling of Ghazan Khan and the emir Nawrūz a desire to present the Ilkhanid Islamic regime as successor to the Abbasid caliphate. By denouncing, as we have seen, the misdeeds committed by the Mamluks at Mārdīn, the Ilkhan based the legitimacy of his Syrian campaign on Islam. Ghazan Khan’s position as “king of Islam” (*pādishāh al-islām*) is clearly visible in the text of his *amān*

59 Charles Melville, “*Pādishāh-i islām*,” 170, according to Wāṣṣaf.

60 Jean Calmard, “Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans,” 281.

61 It is a universal history. Three sets of manuscript versions exist, which have been studied by Charles Melville, who shows that the second set was drawn up by al-Bayḏāwī himself at the beginning of the reign of Ghazan Khan. Al-Bayḏāwī was undoubtedly in Tabriz and witnessed the events himself, see Charles Melville, “From Adam to Abaqa: Qāḏī Bayḏāwī’s Rearrangement of History (Part 1),” *StIr* 30/1 (2001): 70. On the different versions, see Melville, “From Adam to Abaqa: Qāḏī Bayḏāwī’s Rearrangement of History (Part 11),” *StIr* 35/1 (2007): 7–64.

62 Charles Melville, “From Adam to Abaqa (Part 11).”

63 Charles Melville, “*Pādishāh-i islām*,” 164–170; Calmard, “Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans,” 281.

to the population of Damascus, which is laden with Qur'ānic quotations cited in support of his claims.<sup>64</sup>

Although he is not mentioned by name in the sources,<sup>65</sup> it would appear that Ibn Taymiyya was probably one of the group of religious figures who attended at the Umayyad Mosque the reading of this *amān* and the *firmān* naming Sayf al-Dīn Qipchāq representative of Ghazan Khan in Syria and governor of Damascus, a position he had held before fleeing to Ilkhanid territory. The aim of these texts was to convince the people of Damascus that the Ilkhan had come to Syria to protect the civilian populations, victims of the Mamluk regime. Ibn Taymiyya's second *fatwā* is to some extent a response to the Ilkhanid political ideology, as he saw it through his personal contacts with various Mongol authorities. The official texts which had been read in public during the brief occupation of Damascus in 1300 confirmed for Ibn Taymiyya the danger posed to Islam should Syria come under the control of the Mongols, despite the fact that the latter were Muslims themselves. The letter Ghazan Khan addressed to al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad, just over a year later, doubtless reinforced Ibn Taymiyya's beliefs in this regard. On 16 Dhū l-Ḥijja 700/20 August 1301 a meeting took place in the Citadel of Cairo between the envoys of Ghazan Khan, including the *qāḍī* Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad, a descendant of the Prophet, and the great Mamluk emirs. Ḍiyā' al-Dīn Muḥammad made a short speech, studded with Qur'ānic citations, about peace and consensus between Muslims. He prayed for the Sultan al-Malik al-Nāṣir and then for Ghazan Khan. The envoys then presented a letter from the Ilkhan.<sup>66</sup> Ghazan Khan recalled in it that all that had passed between him and the Mamluk sultan was nothing other than the application of the decree of God and of his free will (*qaḍā' Allāh wa-qadiri-hi*).<sup>67</sup> The Ilkhan reminded the Egyptian sovereign that the basis of the confrontation between the two parties was the Mārdīn affair.<sup>68</sup> A Qur'ānic verse was used to support Ghazan Khan's statements: "They [i.e., the Mamluks] entered the city, at a time when its people were unheeding."<sup>69</sup> Ghazan Khan added, "It the rule of Islam [to be understood as the Ilkhan who

64 See chapter 13.

65 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:139; *Kanz* IX:20; *Beiträge*, 62; Ibn Abi l-Faḍā'il xiv:476.

66 The text of this letter sometimes differs slightly from al-Yūnīnī's version. We use here the account of this Syrian historian (al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:181, II:243). Analyze of this letter in chapter 12.

67 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:181, II:212.

68 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:182, II:212.

69 Qur'an 28:15.



directs the *umma*] to fight against rebels” (*ḥukm al-islām fī qitāl al-bughāt*).<sup>70</sup> For Ghazan Khan, the rebels in question were the Mamluk soldiers.

For the Hanbali scholar, the danger was pressing, and in the *fatwā* he therefore presents the Egyptian sultans as the true champions of Islam. According to Ibn Taymiyya, they are part of the group made victorious whom the Prophet referred to when saying: “A group of my community will never cease to show their support for the victory of right, and neither those who oppose them nor those who betray them shall cause them any harm, until the hour passes.”<sup>71</sup> From Yemen to Andalusia, Ibn Taymiyya observes, the Muslim world was weakened by disunity, poor participation in jihad against the Franks, and Tatars, and sectarian religious movements. Worse still, those who were in authority in Yemen had sent a message of submission and obedience to the Ilkhans.<sup>72</sup> Similarly, in the Hijaz, the people were straying and the believers were being degraded, all the more so since Shi‘ism was gaining the upper hand.<sup>73</sup> Ibn Taymiyya here refers to the difficulties the Mamluks had encountered in imposing their rule in the cities of the Hijaz and Yemen, a region with a long tradition of Zaydī Shi‘ism. Since the conquest of Yemen in 569/1174 by Saladin’s son Tūrān-Shāh, it had been the duty of the “Sultan of Islam” to protect the holy places of the Hijaz and settle succession disputes between the *sharīf* of Mecca and Medina. Ibn Taymiyya saw Ghazan Khan’s claims over the holy places, as well as those of Öljeitü at a later stage, as a grave danger for Sunni Islam, and for this reason he argued in favour of the Mamluk regime. The Mongols looked down on al-Malik al-Nāṣir Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn al-Alfī’s lack of noble lineage. Ibn Taymiyya retorted that Ghazan Khan’s ancestors were without doubt all sons of kings, but they were all sons of infidel kings. There was nothing to be proud of about being the son of an infidel king; a Muslim Mamluk is better than an infidel king.<sup>74</sup>

### *The Mongol Political Order as Seen by Ibn Taymiyya*

Through his contacts with a number of high-ranking figures in the Ilkhanid state, Ibn Taymiyya gained information about the Mongol political ideology. The Hanbali scholar reproaches the Ilkhans for not fighting on behalf of Islam, but rather in order to gain the submission of peoples, whoever they might be: “Whoever enters into their obedience of the Age of Ignorance (*al-jāhiliyya*)

70 Al-Yūnīnī/Li Guo 1:182–183, II:213.

71 *Majmū‘ fatāwā* XXVIII:531.

72 *Majmū‘ fatāwā* XXVIII:533.

73 *Majmū‘ fatāwā* XXVIII:533.

74 *Majmū‘ fatāwā* XXVIII:542.

and into their infidel way (*al-kufriyya*) is their friend (*ṣādiqū-hum*), even if he is an infidel, a Jew or a Christian. Whoever refuses to submit is their enemy (*ʿadūwu-hum*), even if he were to be one of the prophets of God.<sup>75</sup>

This second *fatwā*, indeed, represents the world order as the Mongols imagined it: they were invested with the mandate of Eternal Heaven. This Mongol political theocracy was, of course, sharply rejected by Ibn Taymiyya who found in it a weighty argument against Ilkhanid Islam. The Tatars may have pronounced the Muslim declaration of faith, he writes, but they have deviated from the laws of Islam (*khārijūn ʿan sharāʿī al-islām*) by keeping their ancient beliefs from the Age of Ignorance. Ibn Taymiyya addresses the same reproaches to the Ilkhans that Ghazan Khan levelled against the Mamluks in his *amān*. The Hanbali scholar explains the deviant theology of the Mongols as follows:

It is that the Tatars believe grave things about Genghis Khan. They believe that he is son of God, similar to what the Christians believe about the Messiah. The sun, they say, impregnated his mother [...], he was a bastard (*walad zinā*), despite which they hold him to be the greatest messenger of God.<sup>76</sup>

This, for Ibn Taymiyya, was a grave heresy. But, worse yet in the eyes of the Hanbali scholar, since the Mongols considered Genghis Khan as the son of God, they elevated him to the rank of law-giving prophet. Thus the greatest of their leaders in Syria, writes Ibn Taymiyya, when he addressed the Muslim envoys and was trying to find common ground with them declare: “Behold two very great signs (*āya*) come from God: Muḥammad and Genghis Khan.”<sup>77</sup>

The information Ibn Taymiyya relied on in denouncing Mongol Islam was based on his interview with the Mongol emir Qutluḡ-Shāh, converted to Islam under the name Bahāʾ al-Dīn.<sup>78</sup> He declared to Ibn Taymiyya that he was a descendant of Genghis Khan and that his illustrious ancestor had

75 *Majmūʿ fatāwā* XXVIII:525.

76 *Majmūʿ fatāwā* XXVIII:521–522. Thomas Raff sees in this legend the concept of the “immaculate conception,” which exists in both Christianity and Islam and would on this basis be present also in the Genghiskhanid tradition. This analysis is not quite accurate, as Raff (*Remarks*, 46–47) repeats the point of view of the Muslim authors themselves. On this legend see chapter 6.

77 *Majmūʿ fatāwā* XXVIII:521.

78 According to Thomas Raff (*Remarks*, 46), the leader here is Ghazan Khan himself at the time of the interview at Nabk.

been a Muslim (*kāna muslim*).<sup>79</sup> He also said that God had sealed the line of prophets with Muḥammad and Genghis Khan, the king of the Earth (*malik al-basīṭa*); anyone who did not obey him was considered a rebel (*man kharaja min ṭā'ati-hi fa-huwa khārījī*).<sup>80</sup> Here again one notes that Ibn Taymiyya's arguments against the Mongols are the same as those used by Ghazan Khan to denounce the Mamluk regime.

Religious tolerance, or rather Mongol Khans' pragmatism displayed in dealing with the various religious communities of their empire, was another basis for polemics against the Ilkhanid regime:

Every person who lays claim to a branch of learning or to a religion, they consider him a scholar, whether the jurist (*al-faqīh*), the ascetic (*al-zāhid*), the priest (*al-qīsīs*) and monk (*al-rāhib*), the rabbi (*danān al-yahūd*), the astrologer (*al-munajjim*), the magician (*al-sāḥir*), the physician (*al-ṭabīb*), the secretary (*al-kātib*), or the keeper of the accounts (*al-ḥāsib*). They also include the guardian of the idols (*sādin al-aṣnām*).<sup>81</sup>

In the categories listed by Ibn Taymiyya we find the representatives of the three monotheistic religions found in the Ilkhanid empire, but also representatives of important positions in every princely court: administrative officials, physicians, and those charged with determining whether the conjunction of the stars favoured the prince in his political and other actions. The reference to the guardian of the idols has a polemical function here. Ibn Taymiyya emphasized the Mongols did not make any distinction between believers who have been granted a divine book and others. Nevertheless, the respect in which religious specialist were held was related to their expertise in magic, divination, astrology, healing and prolongation of life.<sup>82</sup>

Ibn Taymiyya issues *fatwā* to construct a typology of religious matters (*ʿibadāt wa sāʾir al-maʾmūr*) amongst Adam's progeny (*min banī Ādam*).<sup>83</sup> He considers that every act of worship whose origin is a divine order includes

79 *Beiträge*, 76; *Kanz* IX:32. According to Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī (I:157, II:119) Genghis Khan was not a Muslim.

80 Li Guo/al-Yūnīnī, I:158, II:119; *Beiträge*, 76; *Kanz* IX:32.

81 *Majmūʿ fatāwā* XXVIII:525.

82 Hülegü searched the company of Buddhist priests because they held out the promise of immortality. Arghun died as the result of life-prolongation drug administered by a Buddhist priest, see Peter Jackson, "The Mongols and the Faith of the Conquered," 276.

83 *Majmūʿ fatāwā* xx:66 (*Kitāb Uṣūl al-fiqh*). On these *fatwā* and the typology, see the study of Jean Michot, "Un important témoin," 351–352.

three categories: the rational (*'aqlī*), the confessional (*millī*), and the legal (*shar'ī*).<sup>84</sup> He considers the rational to be “what the followers of reason among the sons of Adam agree on, whether they have been granted a book or not.”<sup>85</sup> The confessional is “what the believers of varied religious confessions (*ahl al-milal*) granted a divine book agree upon,” in other words both Muslims and Qur'ānic People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*).<sup>86</sup> The legal is “what is exclusive to the followers of Qur'ānic law.” Lastly, Ibn Taymiyya deals with the question of royal politics (*siyāsāt al-malakiyya*), which come not under a confession or a divine book, but in which the rational and the legal are necessary.<sup>87</sup> To illustrate this type of government, the Hanbali scholar gives the example of the Genghiskhanid regime.<sup>88</sup>

Genghis Khan had conceived a law, the *yāsā*, according to “his reason (*'aqlī-hi*) and his own opinion (*dihni-hi*).” On this basis Ibn Taymiyya develops an argument that the Mongols were guilty of blameworthy innovation: “He has caused men to leave the ways of the prophets in order to take up that which he has innovated: his way of the Age of Ignorance (*sunnat al-jāhiliyya*) and his infidel law (*shar'īti-hi al-kufriyya*).”<sup>89</sup> With this reasoning, Ibn Taymiyya argues against the Mongols' political system. The Ilkhans' Islam, according to the Hanbali scholar, exposes the Muslim religion to a grave risk because the rational had replaced the legal.<sup>90</sup>

The Mongols of Iran were promoting a modern Islam: they advocated religious freedom and claimed to follow the *yāsā*. In other words, although they had converted to Islam, the Mongol did not comply with the principles of Islamic law. Ibn Taymiyya denounces a form of Islam where the authority of the *yāsā* perpetuates submission to an indeterminate divinity, Eternal Heaven, at the cost of strict obedience to the Sharī'a.

This second *fatwā* goes beyond a standard text of this type. It is an outright condemnation of the politico-Islamic order founded by the Ilkhans. The Hanbali scholar seems to synthesize all the information which he can gather on the Mongols. In his *fatwā*, Ibn Taymiyya refers to persons of high rank and

84 *Majmū' fatāwā* xx:66.

85 *Majmū' fatāwā* xx:66.

86 The Qur'ān and Islamic tradition thus designate the Jews and Christians, holders of an ancient book. The designation was later applied to the Šābi'ūn of the Qur'ān and to the Zoroastrians, see George Vajda, “Ahl al-Kitāb,” *EI*<sup>2</sup> 1:272–274.

87 *Majmū' fatāwā* xx:66.

88 *Majmū' fatāwā* xx:66.

89 *Majmū' fatāwā* xxviii:523.

90 Jean Michot, risking anachronism, speaks of “secularization through Genghiskhanid rationalism,” see *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 66; “Un important témoin,” 252–253.

events attested in the historical chronicles. This information allows us to give an approximate dating to these three texts.

### Attempting to Date the *fatwas* and Conclusion

The first and third *fatwās* clearly seek to define the status of the fighters in the armies of the two sides. The first *fatwā*, whose content regarding the Mongols is not as virulent as that of the second, may well have been issued after the Mamluk defeat at Wādī al-Khaznadār, at the time of the occupation of Damascus by the Mongol troops, when Ibn Taymiyya was acting as an intermediary between the local population and the Mongol authorities. This *fatwā* takes a more conciliatory tone towards the Mongols soldiers. Ibn Taymiyya recognizes that their Muslim faith must be taken into account. While they must be fought, they first must be called to respect the prescriptions of Islam; the *kuffār* who are amongst their ranks must be summoned to convert.<sup>91</sup> The third *fatwā* is dedicated to considering the status of the Mamluks who fought, under duress or willingly, in the Mongol armies. It may have been issued also at the time of the battle of Wādī al-Khaznadār which was won partly due to their presence in the Mongol ranks.

The second *fatwā*, on the other hand, unusually long, is a condemnation of the Ilkhanid regime and of Shi'ism. It addresses the problem posed by the Mongols and their conversion to Islam, but goes far beyond this topic since Ibn Taymiyya also brings up many religious sects in Bilād al-Shām, such as the Ismā'īliyya, Nuṣayriyya, and Ibn 'Arabī's followers, religious tendencies against which he fought incessantly throughout his life. Nevertheless, this criticism of the Mongol regime, accused being of under the influence of major Shi'ite figures, is the essential topic of the *fatwā*. Thomas Raff cites the absence of reference to Ghazan Khan's third invasion of Syria, on 12 Rajab 702/2 March 1303, or to Mamluk victory at Marj al-Şuffar on 2 Ramaḍān/20 April, and on this basis concludes that the *fatwā* was undoubtedly proclaimed in Rajab or Sha'bān, just before the battle. However, as Jean Michot points out in his translation of Ibn Taymiyya's *Lettre à un roi croisé*,<sup>92</sup> Thomas Raff missed a clear allusion in the *fatwā* to Öljeitü's conversion from Sunni Islam to Twelver Shi'ism. The king of these Tatars has now been won over to Rāfiḍism, writes Ibn Taymiyya; the Hijaz, if they capture it, will be "entirely corrupted."<sup>93</sup> Öljeitü's conver-

91 *Majmū' fatāwā* XXVIII:404

92 *Lettre à un roi croisé*, 74, n. 125.

93 *Majmū' fatāwā* XXVIII:533.

sion to Shi'ism probably took place at the end of 708/1308 or the beginning of 709/1309.<sup>94</sup> This *fatwā* cannot, therefore, have been issued before this date. It may have been written in Cairo, where Ibn Taymiyya was staying, just before the new Mongol threat on Bilād al-Shām in 1312 led by the Ilkhan Öljeitü. At that point Ibn Taymiyya left Cairo to support the jihad in Syria.<sup>95</sup>

Troubled by the establishment of a new political order in a large part of the Mamluk world, Ibn Taymiyya denounced the theocratic conception of power based on a law created through the reason of one man, Genghis Khan. Ghazan Khan, despite his conversion to Islam, had remained faithful to the Mongol *yāsā*, raising the danger that malign innovations could be introduced into legalistic Shari'a-based Islam. The Mongols of Iran, even after their conversion to Islam, had not perpetrated any religious persecutions. They had not made their Islam a "state religion." Ibn Taymiyya, as an activist Hanbali scholar, was deeply convinced that religion and state were inextricably linked; without the discipline imposed by revealed law, the state would become tyrannical. Ghazan Khan's form of Islam, based on the rational, risked competing with the true religion (*dīn al-ḥaqq*),<sup>96</sup> which was based on the legal. Viewed in this light, Ilkhanid Islam was the bearer of a conception of power that did not accept the Qur'ān and the interpretation thereof as its sole source of political legitimacy.

However, Ibn Taymiyya's second *fatwā* can only be understood in the historical context in which it was written. This was the time of Öljeitü's conversion from Sunni Islam to Shi'ism in 709/1309 and his moves to gain control over the Hijaz and the holy places of Islam. For Ibn Taymiyya, the Ilkhanid regime was perverted by Shi'ite tendencies from the time of its establishment. These began after the fall of Baghdad with the intrigues of Mu'ayyad al-Dīn b. al-'Alqamī (d. 656/1258), minister of the last Abbasid caliph, al-Musta'ṣim.<sup>97</sup> As far as Ibn Taymiyya was concerned, this Shi'ite perversion could only lead to a complete Shi'ite takeover of the Ilkhanid regime, a takeover that was consummated with the conversion of the "king of the Tatars to Rāfiḍism."

94 The Ilkhan's conversion to Shi'ism was followed by the mass conversion of his emirs, with the exception of the two most powerful, Sa'īd Chūpān and Isen Quṭluḡ. From this date forward, the *khuṭba* was given in the name of the Shi'ite imams, and coins struck in their name. See Judith Pfeiffer, "Conversion Versions: Sultan Öljeitü's Conversion to Shi'ism (709/1309) in Muslim Narrative Sources," *Mongolian Studies* 22 (1999): 41.

95 He returned to Damascus on 1 Dhū l-Qa'da 712/28 February 1313, after a brief stay in Jerusalem; see Henri Laoust, "Ibn Taymiyya," *EI*<sup>2</sup> III:977.

96 Qur'ān 9:59.

97 *Majmū' fatāwā* xxviii:528. He corresponded with the Mongols prior to their attack on Baghdad and contributed to Hülegü's victory over the caliph's army; see John A. Boyle, "Ibn al-'Alqamī," *EI*<sup>2</sup> III:724.

Although he is not named, this assertion relates to Öljeitü. Ilkhanid Rāfiḍism was for Ibn Taymiyya an even greater danger than the Genghiskhanid rationalism of Ghazan Khan, for it could spread throughout *dār al-islām*, and most of all to the Hijaz. The Mamluk regime was the only bastion against this menace. The situation in Mecca provided the Ilkhan with the opportunity to intervene and to widen the influence of Ilkhanid Shi'ite Islam. Since the death of Abū Numayy, head of the Zaydī Shi'ite Banū Qatāda family, in 701/1302, the struggle for power between his four sons had affected the stability of the holy city.<sup>98</sup> As a result, the Mamluks had considerable difficulty in retaining their influence there. In 705/1306, Öljeitü sent an Iraqi caravan with a *maḥmal*<sup>99</sup> to Mecca, just as Ghazan Khan had tried to do in 702/1303 shortly before his death. In 710/1310, Öljeitü proclaimed his Shi'ite profession of faith on his future mausoleum at Şultāniyya, then capital of Persian Ilkhanate.<sup>100</sup> In the foundation inscription on the mausoleum, he styles himself "*sharīf al-islām wa-l-muslimīn*," a play on words alluding to his control of the Hijaz thought his domination of the *sharīfs* of Mecca.<sup>101</sup> A number of inscriptions engraved on this Şultāniyya mausoleum, such as "may God give him victory" and "may God spread his shadow and glorify his lands"<sup>102</sup> clearly refer to the Ilkhan's desire to extend his domain, and by implication dominate Bilād al-Shām. In Ibn Taymiyya's view, Shi'ism was once again a real danger in the region, all the more so as there were already present numerous Shi'ite sects who were ready to strike deals with the enemy. In this "second *fatwā*," the virulence of his attacks against the Ilkhanid regime is a response to the Ilkhans' attempts, since their conversion to Islam, to present themselves as leaders of the Muslim world. Öljeitü's future mausoleum in Şultāniyya—built with certain parallels with the Ka'ba in Mecca—and its epigraphical program symbolized the Shi'ite Ilkhan's desire to occupy the position of protector of the holy places of Islam, hitherto held by the Mamluks.

In drawing up this *fatwā*, Ibn Taymiyya was highly conscious of the danger that the Ilkhans' Shi'ite Islam represented for the Sunni Muslim *umma*. Öljeitü's claims to Syria were to bear no fruit, however: his campaign, launched in 711/1311–12, would spend a month besieging Raḥba and never cross the Euphrates.<sup>103</sup> His claims to the holy places lead to nothing either. His great

98 Charles Melville, "The Year of the Elephant," 199.

99 Charles Melville, "The Year of the Elephant," 199.

100 Sheila Blair, "The Epigraphic Program of the Tomb of Uljaytu at Sultaniyya: Meaning in Mongol Architecture," *Islamic Art* 2 (1987): 61.

101 Sheila Blair, "The Epigraphic Program," 73.

102 Sheila Blair, "The Epigraphic Program," 73.

103 Charles Melville, "The Year of the Elephant," 199.

emir Ḥājjī al-Dilqandī was sent at the head of a thousand troops to aid of Ḥumayḍa b. Abī Numayy, who had come to the Ilkhan's court in 716/1316 requesting military assistance against his brother so as to establish his authority in Mecca. News reached Ḥājjī al-Dilqandī on the road that on 30 Ramaḍān 706/16 December 1316 the Ilkhan departed from this world.<sup>104</sup> It is in this context that this long *fatwā* must be read. It is one of the numerous texts that the Hanbali polemicist drew up at the request of the Mamluk authorities, notably in opposition to the great Shi'ite 'ālim, Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, to whom the Shi'ite sources attribute the credit for Öljeitü's conversion to Twelver Shi'ism.<sup>105</sup> Finally, while the first and third *fatwās* are clearly juridical texts, the "second *fatwā*" is a text that, taking into account the other sources and its markedly polemical character, we might describe as being of historical nature

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104 Charles Melville, "The Year of the Elephant," 200. It was reported that Ḥājjī al-Dilqandī had been given orders by Öljeitü to exhume the bodies of the first caliphs Abū Bakr and 'Umar from their place alongside the Prophet Muḥammad, see *ibid.* Moreover, Öljeitü had in mind to transfer the mortal remains of 'Alī and al-Ḥusayn to his future mausoleum at Sulṭāniyya; see Jean Calmard, "Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans," 284.

105 Jean Calmard, "Le chiisme imamite sous les Ilkhans," 282–283.



## Epilogue. The Mongol Empire after Genghis Khan

The past might provide a legitimating model for the current order of a Golden Age by which the present could be judged. During the post-Mongol period, the past had a real presence among the Muslim Turkic tribal groups who shared the Mongolian nomadic life, customs and system of representations. According to Matthew Innes: “Within a social group, shared beliefs about the past were a source of identity: the image of a common past informed *Wir-Gefühl*,<sup>1</sup> and the defining characteristics of that past identified those who were and were not part of ‘us’ in the present.”<sup>2</sup> During and after the Mongolian empire, to what extent did those wielding the cultural and political power manipulate the figure of Mongol and Timurid rulers? As we have seen, the pro-Mongol Muslim sources depict Genghis Khan as the tool of God and partly “monotheize” the myths of his origin. Thus the Muslim historians succeed to shape his figure as a respectable founding father of Muslim dynasties. How far could the Mongolian past be reshaped by the needs of the present? When Rashīd al-Dīn writes his *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*, the goal is to preserve Mongol history as a “*lieu de mémoire*.” But a chronicler can also use the past for interpreting the present. Narrating is not “telling things as they really were” but involves organizing them to adapt a preconceived scheme and to shape the identity of an entire society. Thus those who recorded the past in written form emerge as adaptors and editors of memory,<sup>3</sup> but also as authors of “texts of identity” which in turn inform that memory.<sup>4</sup> When Mongolia and all the Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union rushed to independence, the medieval past was a factor of building a

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\* I would like to thank Judith Pfeiffer for her reading and comments on this text.

1 A sense of “us-ness,” term borrowed from W. Eggert and B. Pätzold, *Wir-Gefühl und regnum Saxonum bei frühmittelalterlichen Geschichtsschreibern* (Berlin, 1984).

2 Matthew Innes, “Introduction: Using the Past, Interpreting the Present, Influencing the Future,” in *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages*, eds. Y. Hen and M. Innes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

3 See for example the study of Charles Melville on a Central Asian manuscript from the seventeenth century which is an abridgment of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi‘ al-tawārīkh*. The author adapts and modifies the text for a later public, see “Genealogy and Exemplarity Rulership in the *Tarikh-i Chingiz Khan*,” in *Living Islamic History. Studies in Honour of Professor Carole Hillenbrand*, ed. Y. Suleiman (Edinburgh, 2010), 129–150.

4 Matthew Innes, “Introduction: Using the Past, Interpreting the Present, Influencing the Future,” 5.

national consciousness. However the national identity had little to do with history. It is much more concerned with the *construction of a national mythology*.<sup>5</sup>

The fragmentation of the Mongol empire was not the end of an era: Genghiskhanid legitimacy continued to influence rulers in their ideological choices.<sup>6</sup> After the collapse of the Mongol khanates, the Mongol ideology remained vigorous and the charisma of Genghis Khan was still so strong that only his descendants could legally use the sovereign titles: “*khan*” and “*khaghan*.”<sup>7</sup> From the Russian steppe to the Tien Shan mountains nomads formed the ruling class. They remained loyal to the customs and traditions of the Mongol empire, to “the Mongol dynastic custom, the ‘*yasa* of Genghis Khan,’ and to their military lifestyle.”<sup>8</sup> Nevertheless, the Mongol empire left behind a double set of ideologies. In Central Asia, a “pseudo-Genghiskhanid” ruler might seize power by military expedients, but he had to justify his rule through the protection of the Shari‘a. These two ideologies conflicted on many points, but nonetheless continued to coexist for centuries in Central Asia and defined ideas of legitimacy. When the Russians conquered the region, both were still alive. Descent from Genghis Khan remained an important political factor, “as was Central Asia’s identity as an Islamic society.”<sup>9</sup>

The final stage of Ilkhanid rule is notoriously chaotic.<sup>10</sup> After Abū Sa‘īd’s death in 1335, his empire fell prey to factional struggles between Genghiskhanid contenders supported by different emirs.<sup>11</sup> But a new Turko-Mongolian conqueror, Timur, rose to power in 1370 near Samarkand and recaptured the western Mongol empire. He founded a state covering Iran and Central Asia, overthrew the power of the Golden Horde, and defeated the Ottoman sultan Bāyazīd.

5 Maria E. Subtelny, “The Timurid Legacy: A Reaffirmation and a Reassessment,” in *L’héritage timouride. Iran–Asie centrale–Inde xv<sup>e</sup>–xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles*, special issue of *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 3–4 (1997): 15.

6 On Central Asia and the legacy of Mongol ideology, see *Central Asia in Historical Perspective*, ed. Beatrice Forbes Manz (San Francisco: Westview Press, 1994). See also Peter Golden, *Central Asia in World History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

7 Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Temür and the Problem of a Conqueror’s Legacy,” *JRAS* 8/1 (1998): 21.

8 Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Temür and the Problem of a Conqueror’s Legacy,” 21.

9 Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Historical Background,” in *L’héritage timouride. Iran–Asie centrale–Inde xv<sup>e</sup>–xviii<sup>e</sup> siècles*, special issue of *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 3–4 (1997): 6–7.

10 For this period of military and political struggle, see Charles Melville, *The Fall of Amir Chupan and the Decline of the Ilkhanate, 1327–37. A Decade of discord in Mongol Iran* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1999).

11 See Jean Aubin, “Le *quriltai* de Sulṭān-Maydān (1336),” *JA* (1991): 175–197; Denise Aigle, *Le Fārs sous la domination mongole (xiii<sup>e</sup>–xiv<sup>e</sup> s.)*, 165–171.

Timur's career was founded upon both Mongol influence and models of Islamic and sacred kingship. His ambition was to recreate the Mongol empire and reinstate the ancient Genghiskhanid order, and he did so as much by force of "his own personality and charisma as through political manipulations."<sup>12</sup> To justify his power, he presented himself as protector and restorer of the Chaghatayid house and installed a Genghiskhanid puppet *khan*, whose name appears in the *khuṭba*, on his coinage and his official correspondence. However he used for himself only the modest title of commandant (*amīr*), embellishing it with the adjective *buzurg*, great, as well as the epithet *kūregen*, 'son in law' of a descendant of Genghis Khan.

Timur was able to forge a synthesis between the Turko-Mongolian conception of authority based on charisma (*qut*) and Perso-Islamic notions of royal glory (*farr*), good fortune (*dawla*), and manifested destiny (*maqḍūr*).<sup>13</sup> He also developed an alternative to the Genghiskhanid divine mandate by claiming to be a divinely favoured world-conqueror, the "Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction" (*ṣāhib-qirān*).<sup>14</sup> Timur's famous title has no basis in Islamic scriptural tradition, but it derives from the science of astrology.<sup>15</sup> This title signifies that Timur's destiny is governed by the auspicious conjunction of the planets Jupiter and Venus. It is associated with the establishment of Timur's horoscope to bypass the lack of strong *intitulatio*.<sup>16</sup> The myth of being a "Lord

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- 12 On Timur's political manipulations, see Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Rise and Role of Tamerlane* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Michele Bernardini, *Mémoire et Propagande*, 49–72.
- 13 Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 11. Omeljan Pritsack, "The Distinctive Features of the 'Pax Nomadica,'" in *Popoli delle steppe: Unni, Avari, Ungari* (Spoleto: Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, 1998), vol. 2, 751–752; John E. Woods, *The Aqquyunlu: Clan, Confederation, Empire*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1999), 6, 20. The Ghaznavids first used the title (*ṣāhib-qirān*), but not on coinage or epigraphy, see Michele Bernardini, *Mémoire et propagande*, 55–56.
- 14 For the cosmological significance of the title and its previous applications, see Tilman Nagel, *Timur der Eroberer und die islamische Welt des späten Mittelalters* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1993), 10–13; Michele Bernardini, *Mémoire et propagande*, 54–56. On the title *ṣāhib-qirān*, see 'Alī Akbar Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma* (Tehran: Chāpkhāna-yi Majlis, 1325sh/1946), X:14771–14773.
- 15 On the horoscopes before Islam, see David Pingree, "Historical Horoscopes," *JAOS* 82 (1962): 487–502.
- 16 On the links between the title and Timur's horoscope, see Michele Bernardini, *Mémoire et propagande*, 54–55. On Timur's titles, see Gottfried Herrmann, "Zur Intitulatio timuridischer Herrscherkunden," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Suppl. 2/18 (1974): 498–451.

of the Auspicious Conjunction” was elaborated as a model of sacred kingship.<sup>17</sup> For Timur, the connection to the supernatural and its related charisma were crucial factors in establishing and maintaining his authority.<sup>18</sup> Timur claimed to communicate with the divine world through an angel, to have prophetic dreams, and to read the thoughts of his followers.<sup>19</sup> He had even ascended to heaven on a ladder which appeared from the sky, “a clear borrowing from Turko-Mongolian shamanism.”<sup>20</sup> Some shaykhs, as Shāh Ni‘mat Allāh Walī al-Kirmānī, illustrated their perspicacity by recognizing his eminence.<sup>21</sup> As we have seen, Timur linked himself genealogically to two meta-historical figures who were embodiments of charismatic authority in the politico-ideological and religious cultural spheres: Genghis Khan, the world conqueror favoured by Eternal Heaven, and ‘Alī, the first Shi‘ite imam and perfect man of esoteric Islam.<sup>22</sup> This dual genealogical connection as well as the title *ṣāhib-qirān* conferred him the aura of sacral kingship.

In the Mamluk Sultanate, as we have seen, Baybars is also titled “Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction” in three epigraphic inscriptions. However in the case of the Mamluk sultan, this title is clearly related to the Qur’anic Alexander, Dhū l-Qarnayn of the *sura* “The cave.” This title signified a world conqueror who established universal domination. This was not the case of Baybars who inherited the title *ṣāhib-qirān* when he is called *Iskandar al-zamān*. Islamic exegesis has integrated the literary tradition of the *Alexander Romance* deriving from the Pseudo-Callisthene.<sup>23</sup> Alexander’s birth should coincide with the astrologic conjunction that bestowed on him the universal sovereignty. Shaykh al-Khaḍīr, his spiritual director, held great sway over Baybars because of his capacity to prophesy the future: Baybars had a great interest in

17 See Afzar A. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 25–26.

18 On the rulers and the supernatural, see Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 178–207.

19 Jean Aubin, “Comment Tamerlan prenait les villes,” *StIsl* 19 (1963): 88–89.

20 Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty,” *IrSt* 21/1–2 (1988): 118

21 Jean Aubin, “Introduction,” in *Matériaux pour la biographie de Shah Ni‘matullah Wali Kermani* (Tehran, 1956), 11–15; Persian text, 42–44; Jürgen Paul, “Scheiche und Herrscher im Khanat Čatay,” *Der Islam* 67/2 (1990): 307–318; Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Tamerlan’s Career and Its Uses,” *Journal of World History* 13/1 (2002): 8.

22 Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty,” 110–117; Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 12.

23 In a Persian version of the *Alexander Romance*, entitled *Iskandar-nāma-yi haft jildī* by Manūchīhr Khān Ḥakīm, Alexander is identified with Dhū l-Qarnayn and is called *ṣāhib-qirān*, see William H. Hanaway, “Eskandar-Nāma,” *Elr* VIII: 612.

predictions and horoscopes. The title *ṣāhib-qirān* was hence appropriated for the Mamluk sultan.<sup>24</sup>

Timur as the charismatic “Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction” remained an important part of social memory and made him a central object of admiration and imitation for later Muslim sovereigns.<sup>25</sup> They invoked in using this title a direct association with Timur himself. The way Timur was glorified more than two centuries later can be seen in the actions of his descendant, the Mughal emperor of India Shāh Jahān (r. 1628–50). Upon his coronation on 14th February 1628, he assumed the title “Second Lord of the Auspicious Conjunctions” (*ṣāhib-qirān-i thānī*). His official historians explained that this was because “in most manners and ways” the new emperor “was perfectly alike” his ancestor, Timur, and that the aptness of the title derived from “his deeds.”<sup>26</sup> Indeed Shāh Jahān launched from India an audacious campaign in 1646 to regain the Central Asian territories of Timur. This campaign is better understood as a “pursuit of sacred memory.”<sup>27</sup>

Timur himself was not prominent in early Safavid historiography, but in the middle of the sixteenth century, historians began to connect him with some Safavid rulers. Qāḍī Aḥmad Munshī, panegyrist of Shāh ‘Abbās (r. 1587–1629), reports a dream of Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn, founder of the Safavid order, stating that he was seated on a mountain with a crown on his head. He lifts the crown and a sun shines from his head. The historian says that the dream symbolizes “the rising of the sun of the Lord of Auspicious Conjunctions” (*āftāb-i ṣāhib-qirān*), also known as “the friend of God” (*al-khalīl al-raḥmān*), i.e. Abraham.<sup>28</sup>

24 Arghun's use of this astrological title *ṣāhib-qirān* also pointed to his deep interest in astrology, alchemy, and other occult sciences. Under the influence of a yogi from India, Arghun took a life-prolonging drug. After five months he died of illness (inflicted by the supposedly life prolonging drug), see Peter Jackson, “Arghun,” *Elr* 11:404.

25 See Naindeep Singh Chann, “Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction: Origins of the *Ṣāhib-Qirān*,” *Iran and Caucasus* 13/1 (2009): 99–107. For the Ottoman bureaucrat Muṣṭafā ‘Alī only three world conquerors could be called *ṣāhib-qirān*: Alexander, Genghis Khan and Timur, *ibid.*, 99–100; Cornell H. Fleischer, *Bureaucrat and Intellectual in the Ottoman Empire: The Historian Muṣṭafā ‘Alī (1541–1600)* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), 279–280.

26 Habib Irfan, “Timur in the Political Tradition and Historiography of Mughal India,” in *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale* 3–4 (1997): 303; see also Stephen Frederic Dale, “The Legacy of the Timurids,” *JRAS* 8/1 (1998): 43–51.

27 Afzar A. Moin, *The Millennial Sovereign*, 24.

28 Sholeh A. Qinn, “Notes on Timurid Legitimacy in Three Safavid Chronicles,” *IrSt* 31/2 (1998): 151–152. Siyāqī Nizām also links by numerical (*abjad*) means the Safavid and Timurid dynasties. According to his calculation, Shāh ‘Abbās is *ṣāhib-qirān-i a‘alā*, *ibid.*,

Timur's status as world conqueror and dynastic founder is also attested by attempts to make use of his charisma as late as the eighteenth century in Iran. The Turkmen conqueror, Nādir Shāh Afshār (r. 1736–47), openly patterned his career on Timur's. According to Muḥammad Kāzīm Marwī, while hunting, Nādir Shāh discovered Timur's buried treasure and an inscription (*lawḥ*) prophesying his glory.<sup>29</sup> He claimed blood relationship to Timur, pursued a career of conquest through Iran, India and Central Asia,<sup>30</sup> and also adopted the title *ṣāhib-qirān* on his coinage.<sup>31</sup> His panegyrist Mīrzā Mahdī Khan Astarābādī even gives him a Genghiskhanid legitimacy. In his *Tārīkh-i Nādirī* he describes Nādir Shāh's coronation in the Mūghān plain, called a *quriltai*, reminiscing about the Mongol councils which were convened to select the great khans.<sup>32</sup>

The Timurids were Muslim but, like all Turkco-Mongolian tribal groups, they also maintained their customs and traditions, which remained an effective force in Timurid political culture until the end of the dynasty.<sup>33</sup> We find such locutions as “the triumphant *törä*” (*tūra-i qāhira*) and “the *törä* of the Lord of Auspicious Conjunction” (*tūra-i ṣāhib-qirān*)<sup>34</sup> or the formula “in accordance with the *yāsā* of Genghis Khan and the *törä* of His Excellency, Lord of the Auspicious Conjunction” (*bi-mūjib-i yāsā-yi Chīngīzkhānī wa tūra-i ḥazrat-i ṣāhib-qirān*).<sup>35</sup> It is well known that Timur gave preference to the Genghiskhanid *yāsā* over the Sharī'a. Timur said to a group of his emirs that “obedience to the decree of Heaven (*bi-ḥukm-i yārliḡh-i āsamānī*),” that is, of *tenggeri*, “and to the law of Genghis Khan was obligatory and necessary (*tūrā-i Chīnjīskhānī*).”<sup>36</sup> As the Genghiskhanid *yāsā*, the *törä* was concerned chiefly with such aspects of nomadic life as hunting, military discipline, and ceremonial. It does not appear to have been a fixed written code of law, but rather

154. On the dreams in Safavid chronicles, see Sholeh A. Quinn, “The Dreams of Shaykh Safi al-Din and Safavid Historical Writing,” *IrSt* 29 (1996): 127–147.

29. Sholeh A. Quinn, “Notes on Timurid Legitimacy in Three Safavid Chronicles,” 149.

30. Sholeh A. Quinn, “Notes on Timurid Legitimacy in Three Safavid Chronicles,” 149.

31. Dihkhudā, *Lughat-nāma*, x:14772.

32. Ernst Tucker, “Explaining Nadir Shah: Kingship and Royal Legitimacy in Muhammad Kazim Marvī's *Tārīkh-i ālam-ārā-yi Nādirī*,” *IrSt* 26/1–2 (1993): 112.

33. Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 15.

34. Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 16. For the term *törä*, see Dorfer 1:264–267. The word, which occurs in all Turkic languages, is attested in the Old Turkic inscriptions in the form of *törü*, meaning order, regulations, laws, see Omeljan Pritsack, “The Distinctive Features of the ‘Pax Nomadica,’” 751.

35. Shiro Ando, *Timuridische Emire nach dem Mu'izz al-ansāb*, 223, citing Khwandmīr, *Nāma-yi nāmī*; Maria Eva Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 16.

36. Mu'in al-Din al-Naṭanzī, *Muntakhab al-tawārīkh-i Mu'īnī*, 206.

the customs and practices introduced by Timur and promoted by his followers and descendants. According to Maria Subtelny, the *törä* was a means for the Timurids to maintain their warrior culture and Chaghatay identity as distinct from the sedentary Iranian population.<sup>37</sup> The tension that existed between the Turko-Mongolian custom and the Sharī‘a during Timur’s time can be traced back at least to the period of Mongol rule in Iran. Quṭluḡ-Shāh, one of the most influential emirs at Öljeitü’s court was advocating the return of Genghis Khan’s laws and customs (*yāsā wa yūsūn*) as a result of this tension.<sup>38</sup>

In the years after Timur’s death, his youngest son, Shāh Rukh, succeeded in taking over the Timurid central lands in Khurasan.<sup>39</sup> He abandoned the practice of ruling through a puppet *khan*, but Shāh Rukh himself adopted the Mongol supreme title of *khaghan*.<sup>40</sup> The histories written for him soon after he came to power stress both his connection to Timur and his piety and observance of religious obligations. The transfer of the Timurid capital from Samarkand to Herat, “the dome of Islam” (*qubbat al-islām*), with the establishment of the Shahkhurid dispensation in 1415, represented a symbolic shift in focus away from Transoxiana (which Shāh Rukh never controlled) toward the old Khurasanian centers of learning.<sup>41</sup> Shāh Rukh—like Ghazan Khan after his adoption of Islam—presented himself as the leader of the Muslim community by adopting the title *pādishāh-i islām* and sustained Shāh Rukh’s pretensions to be recognized as caliph of the Muslim world. This was reflected in coinage he issued in Herat on which he exhibited the formula “may God perpetuate his caliphate.”<sup>42</sup> At this time, he also conceived the idea that he was the “renewer” of Islam (*mujaddid*) who, according to a hadith, was to appear at the beginning of every century to renew the faith of the Muslim community.<sup>43</sup>

Shāh Rukh’s struggle with the Mamluk sultan Barsbay for religious supremacy in the Hijaz is a sign of Islamic-oriented policy on his part. Shāh Rukh expressed to Barsbay his desire to send the veil (*kiswa*) for the Ka‘ba.<sup>44</sup> The

37 Maria E. Subtelny, *Timurids in Transition*, 17.

38 Jean Aubin, “Le *quriltai* de Sulṭān-Maydān (1336),” 179.

39 On the formation of the Timurid state under Shāh Rukh, see Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*.

40 Beatrice Forbes Manz, *Power, Politics and Religion in Timurid Iran*, 10.

41 Maria E. Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning in Timurid Iran in the Light of the Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh,” *JAOs* 115/2 (1995): 211.

42 Maria E. Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning,” 211; Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Temür and the Problem of a Conqueror’s Legacy,” 35.

43 Maria E. Subtelny and Anas B. Khalidov, “The Curriculum of Islamic Higher Learning,” 212.

44 On the competition between Shāh Rukh and Barsbay, see Malika Dekkiche, “Diplomacy at its Zenith: Agreement Between the Mamluks and the Timurids for the Sending of the

*kiswa* constituted, along with the *khutba* and the *maḥmal*, the most powerful symbol of a ruler's ascendancy or claim for authority over the holy cities.<sup>45</sup> Baybars was the first to dispatch the sacred veil in 1263, and to conclude in 1269 a treatise with the *sharif* of Mecca, Najm al-Dīn Muḥammad Abū Numayy. The Mamluks made clear their claim on the holy cities. Despite the Mamluks' attempt to uphold this prerogative, however, many Muslim rivals would send the *kiswa* over time, thus trying to assert their own claim for religious supremacy in the Hijaz. In 718/1319, for instance, the Ilkhanid ruler Abū Sa'īd sent a *kiswa* along with precious rings to be hung on the Ka'ba's door.<sup>46</sup>

Shāh Rukh's use of Islam is irrefutable, but it has to be reconciled with the fact that the Turko-Mongolian heritage remained active under him: the *yārghū* court survived and he himself invoked the *yāsā*.<sup>47</sup> It is also under Shāh Rukh that we find the full development of Genghiskhanid legitimation. His major act of patronage was the preservation and continuation of Rashīd al-Dīn's works, both the *Jāmi' al-tawārikh* and the *Shu'ab-i panjgana*.<sup>48</sup> Timur had set up his chancellery in two languages, Persian and Turkic in the Uyghur script, with a set of scribes for each. He had also apparently commissioned histories of his reign in Persian and Turkic.<sup>49</sup> The bilingualism of both the chancellery and the literature continued through the life of the dynasty.<sup>50</sup>

The Timurid dynasty is famous for its cultural brilliance. Princes, artists, and historians contributed to Timur's fame by creating a milieu which made the Timurid period a model for further dynasties. Safavid chroniclers modeled their compositions on the tradition of Timurid historiography. Historians

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*Kiswah*," in *Egypt and Syria Under Mamluk Rule: Political, Social and Cultural Aspects*, ed. Amalia Levanoni (Leiden: Brill, 2014), in press; "New Source, New Debate: Reevaluation of the Mamluk-Timurid Struggle for Religious Supremacy in the Hijaz (Paris, BnF ms. ar. 4440)," *MSR* 18 (2014), in press.

45 Maurice Gaudefroy-Demombynes, "Le Voile de la Ka'bah," *StIsI* 2 (1954): 5–21.

46 Charles Melville, "The Year of the Elephant' Mamluk-Mongol Rivalry in the Hejaz in the Reign of Abū Sa'īd (1317–1335)," *StIr* 21 (1992): 202.

47 Maria E. Subtelny, "The Sunni Revival under Shāh-Rukh and Its Promoters: A Study of the Connection Between Ideology and Higher Learning in Timurid Iran," in *Proceedings of the 27th Meeting of Haneda Memorial Hall: Symposium on Central Asia and Iran, August 30, 1993* (Kyoto: Institute of Inner Asian Studies, Kyoto University, 1994), 20; Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Temür and the Problem of a Conqueror's Legacy," 35.

48 John E. Woods, "Timur's Genealogy," 109–116; "The Rise of Timūrid Historiography," *Journal of the Near Eastern Studies* 46/2 (1987): 81–108.

49 John E. Woods, "The Rise of Timūrid Historiography," 82–83; Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Temür and the Problem of a Conqueror's Legacy," 39.

50 Jean Aubin, "Le mécénat timouride à Chiraz," *StIsI* 8 (1957): 71–88.



were also interested in promoting the Safavid legitimacy in Timurid terms by invoking Timur's name and the symbols associated with his rule.<sup>51</sup> According to some histories, Shāh 'Abbās's successor, Shāh Ṣafī (1629–42), received as a present from the governor of Bahrayn a sword identified as Timur's who was a sign of his great fortune and foretelling his world conquest.<sup>52</sup> In his *Khulasāt al-tawārīkh*, Qāḍī Aḥmad juxtaposed the Safavid rulers Ismā'īl I and Ismā'īl II with Abū Sa'īd *ilkhānī* and Abū Sa'īd *kūrigānī* that is an attempt to stress the closeness of the Safavids to the earlier dynasties and to establish parallels between the reigns of the two Ismā'īl and the two Abū Sa'īd.<sup>53</sup>

The history of Timur's deeds became the origin of a rich store of tales and myths. Legendary accounts, elaborated later in Central Asia, became into being during Timur's lifetime and during the rule of his descendants. In the beginning of the eighteenth century, Central Asia witnessed the appearance of heroic apocryphal biographies about Timur. These anonymous texts both in Persian and Chaghatay Turkic, three hundred years after Timur's death, quickly gained enormous popularity.<sup>54</sup> This apocryphal literature continued to contribute to Timur's fame among the Turkic peoples until as late as the twentieth century.

Nevertheless, in Central Asia the career of Genghis Khan remained powerful and provided a kind of constitutional framework for later generations. At the beginning of the sixteenth century a new political legitimacy appeared which was grounded on the Mongol legacy and the Sharī'a.<sup>55</sup> The Shibanids originated as a tribal confederation in the eastern regions of the Golden Horde, north of the Aral Sea. In the 1440s they began to organize under a descendant of Genghis Khan, Abū l-Khayr Khan, and to interfere in the affairs of Timur's descendants in Transoxiana. In 1501–7 Muḥammad Shībānī (Abū l-Khayr's grandson) crossed into Transoxiana, driving out the remaining Timurid regimes. His allies include descendants of Genghis Khan as well as

51 See Sholeh A. Quinn, "The Historiography of Safavid Prefaces," in *Safavid Persia. The History and Politics of an Islamic Society*, ed. Charles Melville (London: Tauris, 1996), 1–25; "Notes on Timurid Legitimacy in Three Safavid Chronicles," 151–152; Maria Szuppe, "L'évolution de l'image de Timour et des Timourides dans l'historiographie safavide du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Cahiers d'Asie centrale* 3–4 (1997): 313–331.

52 Sholeh A. Quinn, "Notes on Timurid Legitimacy in Three Safavid Chronicles," 149.

53 Sholeh A. Quinn, "The Historiography of Safavid Prefaces," 12.

54 See Ron Sela, *The Legendary Biographies of Tamerlane. Islam and Heroic Apocrypha in Central Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

55 Robert D. McChesney stylizes "neo-Genghiskhanids" the khans of this period, *Central Asia Foundations of Change* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1996), 124.

non-Genghisid military men collectively called “Uzbek.”<sup>56</sup> Shībānī Khan knew that being a descendant of Genghis Khan was not enough to secure the loyalties either of the Uzbek tribes or of the sedentary people, and he had already defined himself by another identity, that is the Muslim one. “By personal attainment I am a servant of God. By birth I am from the house of Genghis,” he says in his *Dīwān*.<sup>57</sup> It is well known that the *yāsā* remained in use among the Shibanid dynasty despite their conversion to Islam a long time ago. The Mongol *yāsā* and the Sharī’a coexisted.<sup>58</sup> The Uzbeks khans, who assumed took power over Transoxiana, were directly descended from Genghis Khan through his son Jöchi and considered their rule as a restoration of the true Genghiskhanid tradition.

In his study on political orientation in Central Asia in the seventeenth century, Robert McChesney points out that the fundamental obligation of all emirs was a loyalty to the Mongolian tradition, which included implicit obedience to the Genghiskhanid law. The terms of *yāsā* and *yūsūn*, like those of *urf* and *siyāsa* were still functioning during this period.<sup>59</sup> The fact that the corpus of customary law designed as the “*yāsā* and *yūsūn*” is an explicit acceptance of authority emanating from Genghis Khan. Maḥmūd b. Amīr Walī, author of a historical-biographical work of the first half of the seventeenth century, characterizes the customary law as a manifestation of both temporal and spiritual authority (*shāhī wa payghambarī dū jawhar dar yak anghustarī*). We can see here a symbol of “the organic nature of the *yāsā*” and its ability to incorporate non-Genghisid elements and be also considered faithful to the Mongolian tradition.<sup>60</sup>

The Manghits were the first non-Genghisids to rule Transoxiana since the Timurids.<sup>61</sup> The founder of the Manghit rule was Muḥammad Raḥīm (r. 1747–59). As Timur, he was legitimated by marriage with a Genghiskhanid woman and by the claim that he had a common ancestor with the Great Khan. However the Manghits switched the ruler’s title of *khan* to *amīr*, which in this case meant a shift from tribal Turko-Mongol to Islamic legitimation.

56 Robert D. McChesney, *Central Asia Foundations of Change*, 124–125.

57 Nurten Kiliç, “Change in Political Culture: The Rise of Sheybani Khan,” in *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 3–4 (1997): 59.

58 See Ken’ichi Isogai, “Yasa and Shari’a in Early 16th Century Central Asia,” in *Cahiers d’Asie Centrale* 3–4 (1997): 91–103.

59 Robert D. McChesney, “The Amirs of Muslim Central Asia in the XVIIth Century,” *JESHO* 26/1 (1983): 35.

60 Robert D. McChesney, “The Amirs of Muslim Central Asia in the XVIIth Century,” 35, n. 7.

61 Manghit is the self denomination for Mongols and Turkic tribes which played an eminent role in the Golden Horde, on this dynasty, see Anke von Kügelgen, “Manghits,” *Elr* (online).

The title *amīr* stood here for *amīr al-mu'minīn* (Commander of the faithful) that is caliph. This title was adopted by Amīr Ḥaydar (r. 1800–26).<sup>62</sup> But like Timur, he was able to claim a dual ascendance, both from Genghis Khan and the Prophet Muḥammad on the mother's side.<sup>63</sup> Whether his successors maintained this claim is not clear. The last Manghit ruler, Amīr Sayyid 'Ālim Khan (r. 1910–20) wrote in his memoirs that the Muslim scholars regarded the *amīrs* of Bukhara as deputies of the Prophet and guardians of the Sharī'a, but he also referred to the Mongolian tradition (*'ādat-i mughūl*).<sup>64</sup>

In Central Asia, modern discourses on history and nation first appeared in the mid-nineteenth century, but the profound change occurred with the establishment of Soviet rule in 1917 and Stalin's concept of ethnic nationalism.<sup>65</sup> In the Marxist scheme, Genghis Khan represented a "primitive" stage of socio-political development and an enemy of the "Russian nation." The collapse of the Soviet Union opened the way for the populations of the Central Asian republics to "redefine the symbolic references of their identity, and at level they had never before experienced."<sup>66</sup>

In an article devoted to the "popularization" of the national past in the post-Communist Mongolia, Françoise Aubin quoted a very relevant proverb from Communist countries: "One never knows what the king of past will be made tomorrow."<sup>67</sup> Indeed, in Uzbekistan Genghis Khan remained marginal since the country produced his own hero: Timur. The latter became the father of post-soviet Uzbekistan, even though the historical Uzbeks had driven his descendants from Central Asia. Timur was Muslim, a hero of Central Asian popular literature, and he was also a model of personal authoritarian government. The Timurid legacy played an important role in the formation of Uzbek national consciousness and in the construction of Uzbekistan's national mythology.

62 Anke von Kügelgen, *Die Legitimierung der mittel-asiatischen Mangitendynastie* (Istanbul, 2002), 287–292.

63 Anke von Kügelgen, *Die Legitimierung der mittel-asiatischen Mangitendynastie*, 226–233.

64 Anke von Kügelgen, *Die Legitimierung der mittel-asiatischen Mangitendynastie*, 30, n. 136.

65 On these changes, see Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 132–136.

66 Roberte Hamayon, "Chamanisme, bouddhisme, heroism épique: quel support d'identité pour les Bouriates post-soviétiques?" *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 27 (1996): 327.

67 Françoise Aubin, "Renouveau gengiskhanide et nationalisme dans la Mongolie postcommuniste," *Cahiers d'Études sur la Méditerranée Orientale et le Monde Turco-Iranien* 16 (1993): 137. English translation of this proverb by Aurélie Biard and Marlène Laruelle, " 'Tengrism' in Kyrgyzstan: In Search of New Religious and Political Legitimacy," in *Representing Power In Modern Inner Asia: Conventions, Alternatives and Oppositions*, eds. Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace, Roberte Hamayon, and Scott Pearce (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 2010), 55.

Maria Subtelny has pointed out that Timur's legacy has been *overemphasised* by Uzbek historians at the expense of the Shibanid contribution to the cultural history of Central Asia.<sup>68</sup> Timur has become an Uzbek national symbol, and cultural figures such as Sulṭān Ḥusayn Bāyqarā and 'Alī Shīr Nawā'ī have become the "founders" of modern Uzbek language and literature.<sup>69</sup> But the mainly cultural centres of cultural production were not located in Transoxiana and the chief cultural figures were non-Uzbek Turkic peoples. This reconstructed history ignores important legacies for the building of an Uzbek national identity, namely, the Shibanid legacy.<sup>70</sup> Two theories has been put forward to explain why the Timurid heritage was much more highly regarded than the Shibanid one. The first was that the impressive architecture attested an evident Timurid presence. The second was the late arrival of the Shibanids into the region and the Soviets' wish to confer on the Uzbeks more "glorious" ancestors.<sup>71</sup> According to Maria Subtelny, the nomadic character associated with the Shibanids made them a little inferior to the sedentary population in Soviet eyes.<sup>72</sup> For the independent Uzbeks Timur's fame and conquests give Uzbekistan an independent place in world history. The statues of "Amir Timur" replaced those of Lenin and Marx in central squares of Tashkent and Samarkand, also two international figures.<sup>73</sup> The Jubilee of 1996 on Timur's supposed 660th anniversary was marked by two conferences co-sponsored by the UNESCO and the Uzbek government.<sup>74</sup> At both symposia President Karimov described Timur's importance in the history of Uzbekistan. The Timurid sultan created a centralized government, built international ties, and promoted scholarly and artistic activities, all models of behaviour for modern Uzbekistan.<sup>75</sup>

The changing of political identity in the modern world, mainly with the rise of national ideologies, led to Genghis Khan's marginalization in the Muslim realm, while giving him a central place in other parts of the world, such as

68 Maria E. Subtelny, "The Timurid Legacy: A reaffirmation and a Reassessment," in *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale* 3–4 (1997): 14.

69 Maria E. Subtelny, "The Timurid Legacy," 15.

70 Maria E. Subtelny, "The Timurid Legacy," 16.

71 Ron Sela, *The Legendary Biographies of Tamerlane*, 14, n. 31.

72 Maria E. Subtelny, "The Timurid Legacy," 17. On Timur's reception in the former Soviet Union and in the independent Uzbekistan, see the synthesis of Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," 15–25.

73 Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," 22.

74 The Paris conference was entitled "Amir Timur in World History," that of Tashkent "Timur and His Role in World History," Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," 22.

75 Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," 24.

Mongolia and China.<sup>76</sup> After the fall of the Communist regime, as in Muslim Central Asia with Timur, the new democratic Mongolia used the figure of Genghis Khan for building a national identity.<sup>77</sup>

After the political changes of 1990, all the elements of the Mongol tradition that had been concealed under the Communist regime were drawn forth and restored. A state cult was invented to federate the young nation.<sup>78</sup> The white and black sacred standards of Genghis Khan are the symbols of the empire. The white standard appears in the *Secret History* for the first time in paragraph 202 in the account of the foundation of the empire in 1206.<sup>79</sup> It is considered as the support of the protector spirit (*sülde*) of Genghis Khan. The great white standard was recreated and placed on the right of the state hall in the government building in Ulaanbaatar as a symbol of peace.<sup>80</sup> The black standard, symbol of protection from war and crisis, was put in the Ministry of Defense building.<sup>81</sup>

76 See Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 138–162.

77 On the perception of Genghis Khan in Mongolia, see Françoise Aubin, “Renouveau gengiskhanide et nationalisme dans la Mongolie postcommuniste,” 137–204; “La Mongolie des premières années de l’après-communisme: La popularisation du passé national dans les mass media mongols (1990–1995),” *Études mongoles et sibériennes* 27 (1996): 305–326. On Genghis Khan’s visual representations, see Isabelle Charleux, “Chinggis Khan: Ancestor, Buddha or Shaman? On the uses and abuses of the portrait of Chinggis Khan,” *Mongolian Studies* 31 (2009): 207–258; “From Ongon to Icon: Legitimization, Glorification and Divinization of Power in some Examples of Mongol Portraits,” in *Representing Power In Ancient Inner Asia: Legitimacy, Transmission And The Sacred*, eds. Isabelle Charleux, Grégory Delaplace, Roberte Hamayon, and Scott Pearce (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 2010), 209–259; “Critères changeants d’authenticité: sur quelques portraits anciens et modernes de Chinggis Khan dans le monde mongol,” in *Miscellanea Asiatica. Festschrift in Honour of Françoise Aubin*, eds. Denise Aigle, Isabelle Charleux, Vincent Goossaert and Roberte Hamayon (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2011), 409–469.

78 See Sedenjav Dulam, “Two Aspects of the State Cult in Contemporary Mongolia: The Sacrifice to the Mountains and the Cult of the Standards,” in *Representing Power In Modern Inner Asia*, 37–42.

79 See Elisabetta Chiodo, “The Black Standard (*qara sülde*) of Chinggis Qagan in Baruun Xüree,” *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 16 (1997–1998): 250–254; “The White Standard (*cagan tug sülde*) of the Caqar Mongols of Üüsin Banner,” *Ural-Altäische Jahrbücher* 16 (1999–2000): 232–234.

80 Constituted by manes of white horses stemming from every province it symbolizes the union of the people, see Isabelle Bianquis, “Quelques pistes de réflexion à partir du texte de Sedenjav Dulam,” in *Representing Power In Modern Inner Asia*, 45. See fig. 9.

81 Sedenjav Dulam, “Two Aspects of the State Cult in Contemporary Mongolia: The Sacrifice to the Mountains and the Cult of the Standards,” 40.

Genghis Khan is nowadays presented as the greatest man of all times, and the champion of universal peace. In October 1994, the “Ikh Zhasag Higher Institute of Law” was established in Ulaanbaatar to teach public, private and criminal law.<sup>82</sup> Its director, Namsarain Niam-Osor, declared on 7 June 2002:

The great *zhasag*, the basic law of the great Mongol state, was adopted in 1206 and implemented in the territories of the great Mongol empire which included forty states in Asia and Europe [...]. The *zhasag* contained rules to guarantee human rights and freedom. Nobody, whether noble or common, rich or poor, could be discriminated against on grounds of his nationality, religion, age or sex. All had to be treated equally. The adoption and observance of the great *zhasag* [...] was the Mongols' greatest contribution to mankind. And the director added that “This is the reason why scholars all over the world study and value the *zhasag*.”<sup>83</sup>

In modern day Mongolia, the figure of Genghis Khan is, more and more, being associated with Tenger (*tenggeri*, in the *Secret History*). Neo-Shamanist centers have been trying to reinvent a national religion.<sup>84</sup> According to the state shaman “it is thanks to shamanism that Genghis Khan conquered half of the planet.”<sup>85</sup> Mongolian intellectuals such as the academician Shagdaryn Bira promoted a reinvented “national religion” of Eternal Heaven/Sky (Tenger) inherited from Genghis Khan.<sup>86</sup> A cult of Tenger “invented with the greatest seriousness,” doubling the worship of Genghis Khan appeared just after 1990.<sup>87</sup>

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82 Françoise Aubin & Roberte Hamayon, “Alexandre, César et Gengis Khan dans les steppes d'Asie centrale,” in *Les Civilisations dans le regard de l'autre, Actes du colloque international (Paris, 13 et 14 décembre 2001, UNESCO-EPHE)* (Paris: UNESCO, 2002), 92.

83 *Daily News*, 7 June 2002.

84 Isabelle Charleux, “Chinggis Khan: Ancestor, Buddha or Shaman?” 239.

85 Laetitia Merli, *De l'ombre à la lumière, de l'individu à la nation. Ethnographie du renouveau chamannique en Mongolie postcommuniste* (Paris: Centre d'études mongoles et sibériennes, 2010), 245–246. English translation by Isabelle Charleux, “Chinggis Khan: Ancestor, Buddha or Shaman?” 240.

86 Shagdaryn Bira, “Mongolian Tenggerism and Modern Globalism. A Retrospective Outlook on Globalisation. A Lecture Given at the Royal Asiatic Society on 10 October 2002. By Sh. Bira on the Occasion of His Receiving the Denis Sinor Medal,” *JRAS* 14/1 (2004): 3–12. On Tenggerism in Mongolia, see Françoise Aubin, “Renouveau gengiskhanide et nationalisme dans la Mongolie postcommuniste,” 138; Isabelle Charleux, “Chinggis Khan: Ancestor, Buddha or Shaman?” 241–242.

87 Françoise Aubin, “Renouveau gengiskhanide et nationalisme dans la Mongolie postcommuniste,” 148.

During the Mongolite Symposium held in August 2000 at Ulaanbaatar, a member of the Research Academy claimed that Tenggerism could become the fourth monotheist religion in the world.<sup>88</sup> A “Center of Shaman Eternal Heavenly Sophistication” organized collective rituals to Tenger, including the invocation of Genghis Khan. But the Great Khan and Tenger are sometimes confused, because Genghis Khan was “divinized” as the founding ancestor and became himself a “sky,” a superior protector of the Mongolian nation.<sup>89</sup> They became the basis of a kind of state cult “associating a person, Genghis Khan, and an abstract concept, Tenger.”<sup>90</sup>

Tenggerism as an alternative cult is also used to build national identity in several Turkic countries as in Kirghizstan. Tenggerism spread and was adopted as the *native* religion by some intellectual circles.<sup>91</sup> This movement is based upon the promotion of a so-called “return” to the ancient religion (*tengrichilik*) of the Turkic peoples.<sup>92</sup> As an “invented tradition,” Tenggerism has been formulated with political goals: one of them is to bypass the lineage loyalty of traditional nomadic society. Despite the tenacity displayed by Tengrits in making claims of continuity with ancient Turkic practices, the population has little subscribed to the *tengrichilik*, and the movement has found no echo in rural areas.<sup>93</sup>

The climax of the Genghis Khan frenzy was reached in 2006, with the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the Genghiskhanid state. These remembrances associated the 85th years of the Revolution, the annual festival of the Naadam, and the inauguration of a “Monument to the Great Master Genghis Khan” on the Sühbaatar square. The monument replaced a mausoleum containing the remains of Sühbaatar, the hero of the independence war, and that of Marshal Choibalsan, known as the “Mongolian Stalin.”<sup>94</sup> To place the country under the protection of the supernatural entities, the ceremonies of 2006 were preceded

88 Laetitia Merli, *De l'ombre à la lumière*, 309; Isabelle Charleux, “Chinggis Khan: Ancestor, Buddha or Shaman?” 242.

89 Laetitia Merli, *De l'ombre à la lumière*, 301.

90 Roberte Hamayon, “The Joint Making of Illusion and Disillusion: Chinggis Khan on a Buryat Calendar,” in *Representing Power In Modern Inner Asia*, 166.

91 Roberte Hamayon, “The Joint Making of Illusion and Desillusion: Chinggis Khan on a Buryat Calendar,” 167, n. 39.

92 The term *tengrichilik* means in Kyrgyz “practices linked to the sky,” see Aurélie Biard and Marlène Laruelle, “‘Tengrism’ in Kyrgystan,” 56.

93 Aurélie Biard and Marlène Laruelle, “‘Tengrism’ in Kyrgystan,” 89.

94 Their remains were cremated and transferred to Altan Ölgii, the notables’ cemetery in the suburbs of Ulaanbaatar, Grégory Delaplace, “Marshal Choibalsan’s ‘Second Funeral,’” in *Representing Power In Modern Inner Asia*, 97.

by sacrifices on mountains surrounding the capital and at the sacred mount Burhan Haldun (the Burqan Qaldun of the *Secret History*). The inauguration of the monument dedicated to Genghis Khan is a testimony of exaltation of the Great Khan as the absolute symbol of the Mongolian nation. His elevation as an “ancestor of reference” by the construction of the monument thus implies a *relegation* of the deads he replaced in this position. However, according to Grégory Delaplace this does not mean that these latter were simply removed,<sup>95</sup> rather a new set of ritual downgraded them to a lower status than the one they had previously enjoyed.<sup>96</sup> These ceremonies revived the principle of a common ancestor to the nation and placed the “manipulated” symbols under the protection of the spirits. Thus the objective of the government was to show its ability to gather the people by associating remembrance and “sacralization.”<sup>97</sup>

Genghis Khan and Timur’ careers are conform to the traditional model of the nomad conqueror. They share common traits of the nomad dynastic founders: a difficult youth, but also an aristocratic lineage.<sup>98</sup> The image of men of will and high destiny, rising from low station to rule the world conferred Genghis Khan and Timur a place of honour both in East and West. The history of the Great Khan and his heirs became an integral part of Muslim historiography, and Genghis Khan’s position as the revered forefather of many Central Asian Turkic dynasties won him a prominent place in Muslim historiography. While, Islamic texts place Timur next to Genghis Khan among the great world conquerors, but in some sources the Timurid sultan was not simply the restorer of the Genghiskhanid order, but he was himself a “second, equal, Genghis Khan.”<sup>99</sup> Creators of empires, great centralizers, promoters of world order whith an interest in international trade are traits that have made Genghis Khan and Timur popular in all literary genres, even in Europe.

In the West Genghis Khan changed, as we have seen, from the “Scourge of God”<sup>100</sup> in the first half of the thirteenth century into a wise ruler in Marco Polo’s *Devisement du monde*, and a savior figure though the legend of Prester John. In the late Enlightenment, he became the Oriental despot

95 A new mausoleum built within the Altan Ölgii cemetery was similar to the old one on Sühbaatar square, Grégory Delaplace, “Marshal Choibalsan’s ‘Second Funeral,’” 112.

96 Grégory Delaplace, “Marshal Choibalsan’s ‘Second Funeral,’” 104.

97 On these commemorations, see Isabelle Bianquis, “Quelques pistes de réflexion à partir du texte de Sedenjav Dulam,” 43–54; “L’émotion en politique. Les rituels d’État en Mongolie, étude des relations entre les parties et le Tout,” in *Miscellanea Asiatica. Festschrift in Honour of Françoise Aubin*, 373–386.

98 Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty,” 115.

99 Beatrice Forbes Manz, “Tamerlane and the Symbolism of Sovereignty,” 107.

100 Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 156.



*par excellence*.<sup>101</sup> This image, however, shifted with the development of the idea of western superiority. The portrayal of Timur, based in part on European emissaries' world of mouth and on reports by Bertrando de Mignanelli, contributed to the mythical development of his image.<sup>102</sup> The interest that Timur aroused in Europe was more literary than scholarly. He provided subject matter both for composers and French philosophes. Timur was prominent in literature as the conqueror who "dragged the Ottoman sultan Bayazid around in a cage."<sup>103</sup> The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries also saw the publication of the first biographies of these two great conquerors in French language.<sup>104</sup> At this time, like Alexander the Great, Genghis Khan and Timur's place within the pantheon of great rulers of popular and court culture was established both in Europe and Asia.

In the contemporary Inner Asia, as we have seen, the successful emergence of an autonomous nation-state on the international stage needs historical symbols, in particularly a great national hero. The rise of nationalism in Muslim Central Asia drove Genghis Khan into the fringes of the collective memory, but he became the father and protector of the young Mongolian state, while the figure of Timur, great Muslim conqueror, became the father of Uzbekistan. Genghis Khan, creator of the greatest empire of the world and Timur, his symbolic heir, are literally "markers" of the Islamic world, but also of world history.

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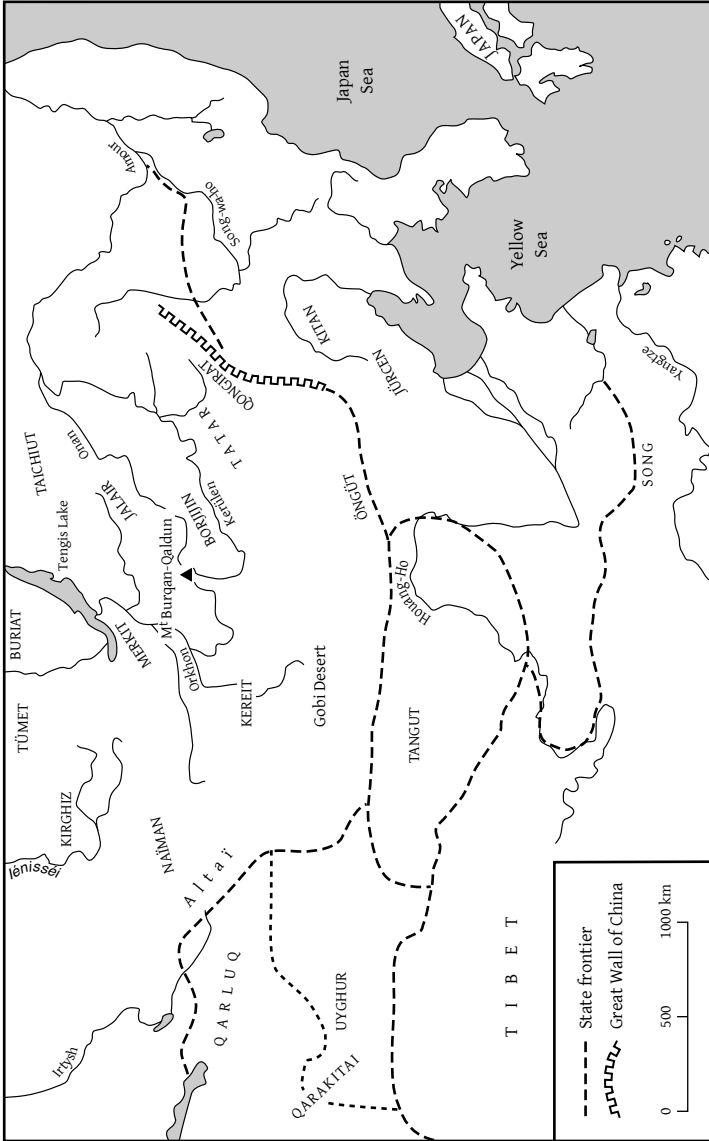
101 Michal Biran, *Chinggis Khan*, 156.

102 Angelo Michele Piemontese, "Beltramo Mignanelli senese biografo di Tamerlano," in *Oriente Moderno* 1 (1996): 213–226. On Timur's representation see also Michele Bernardini, "Tamerlano protagonista orientale," in *Mappe della letteratura europae e mediterranea. 11. Dal Barocco all'Ottocento*, ed. Gian Mario Anselmi (Milan: Paravia Bruno Mondadori), 227–248; Vincent Fourniau, "Quelques aspects du thème timouride dans la culture française du XVI<sup>e</sup> au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle," in *Oriente Moderno* 2 (1996): 283–304.

103 Beatrice Forbes Manz, "Tamerlane's Career and Its Uses," 11.

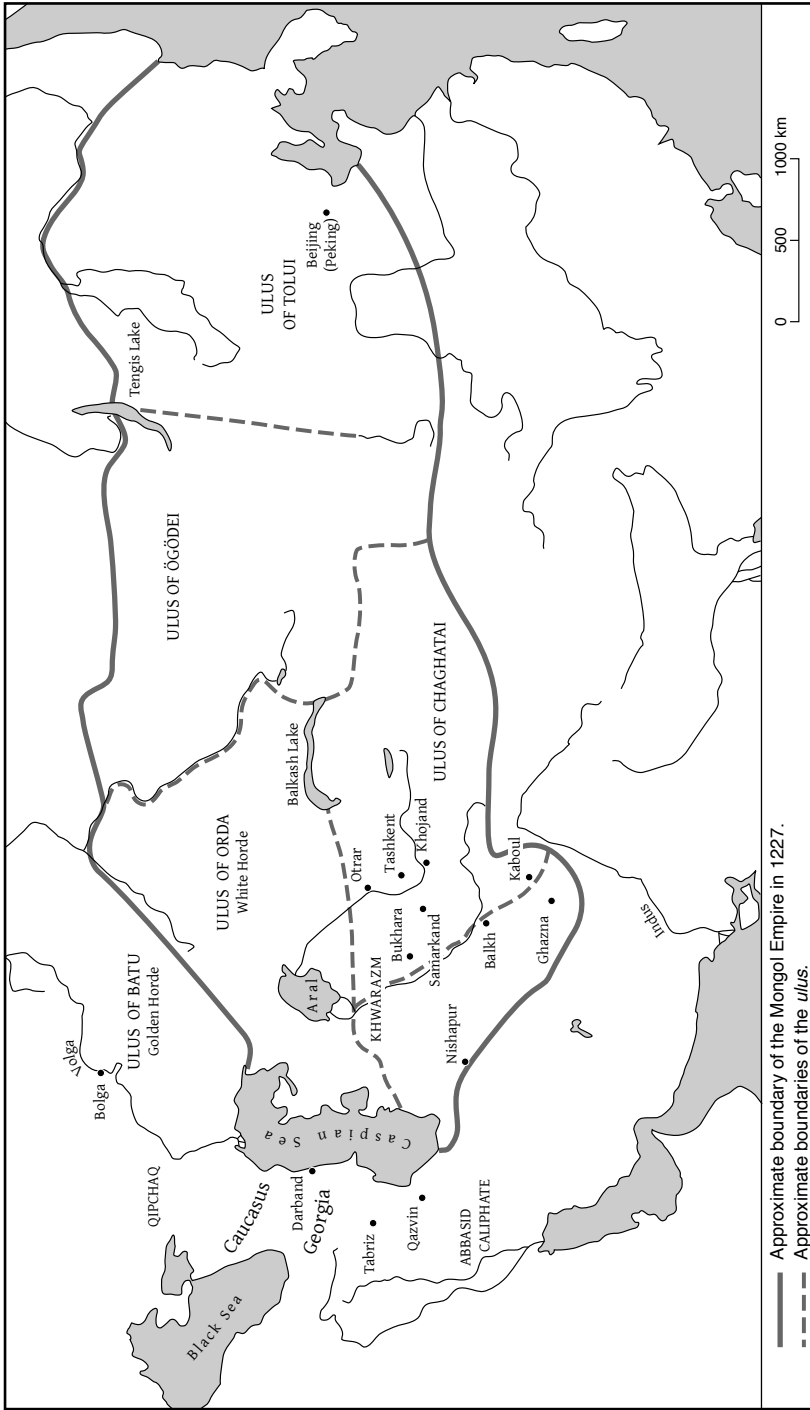
104 François Petis de la Croix, the father, wrote a *Histoire du Grand Genghizcan* (published posthumously by his son, and translated into English in 1722). Petis de la Croix's son translated the Timur's deeds by Sharaf al-Din 'Ali al-Yazdī, *Histoire de Timur-bec*, 1722. It was an early translation of Timur's biography by Ibn 'Arabshāh, see Jean DuBec, *Histoire du grand Tamerlan*, 1612.

# Maps



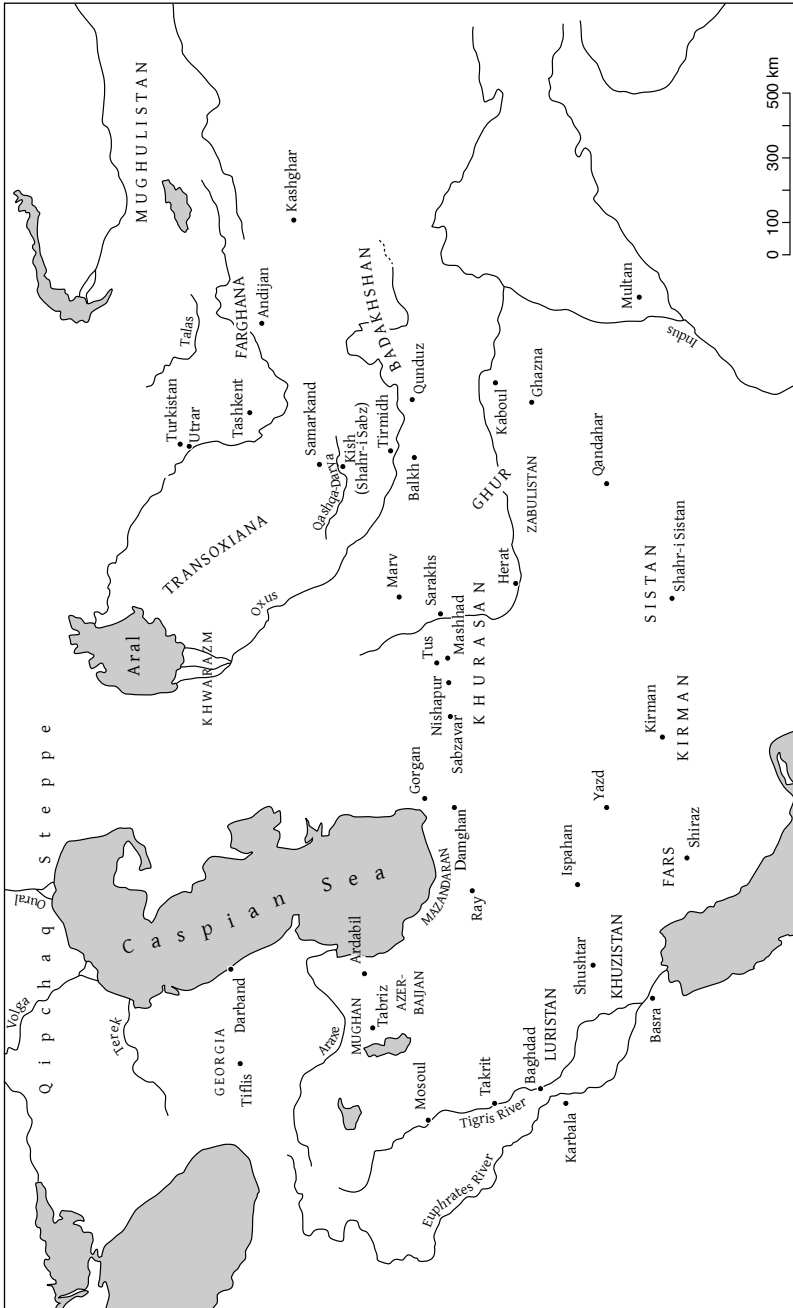
Cartography : V. LAHAYE, Paris-Sorbonne, 2000.

MAP 1 Eastern Asia



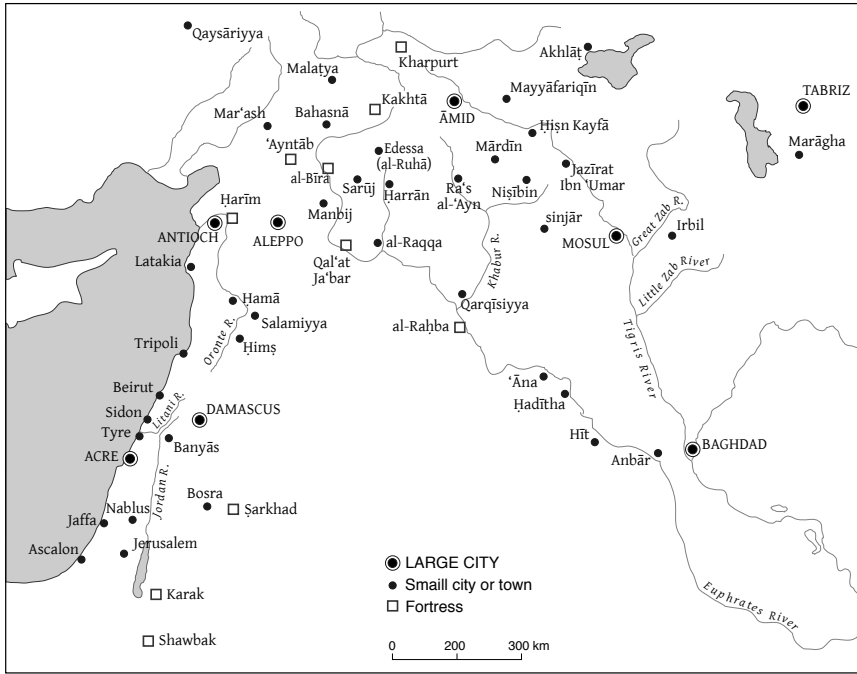
Cartography : V. LAHAYE, Paris-Sorbonne, 2000.

MAP 2 Central Asia in Mongolian period

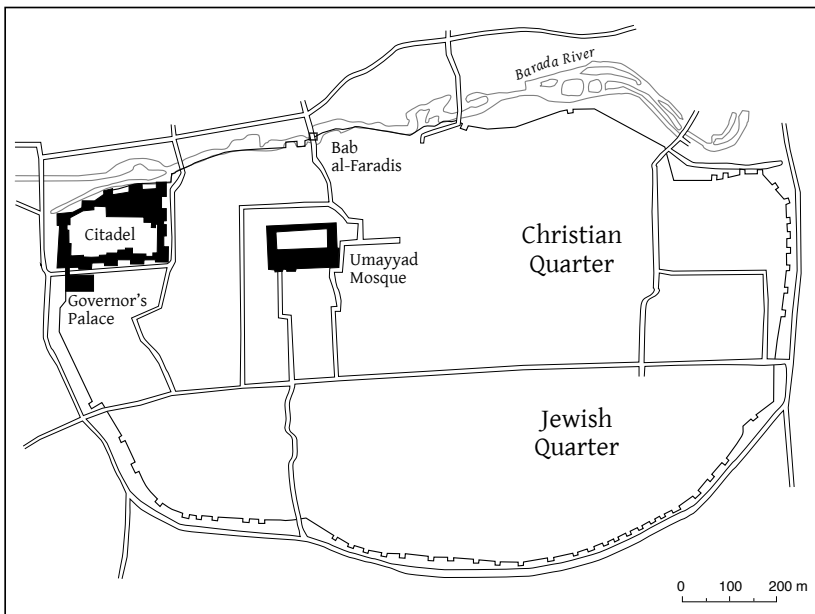


Cartography : V. LAHAYE, Paris-Sorbonne, 2000.

MAP 3 Great Iran



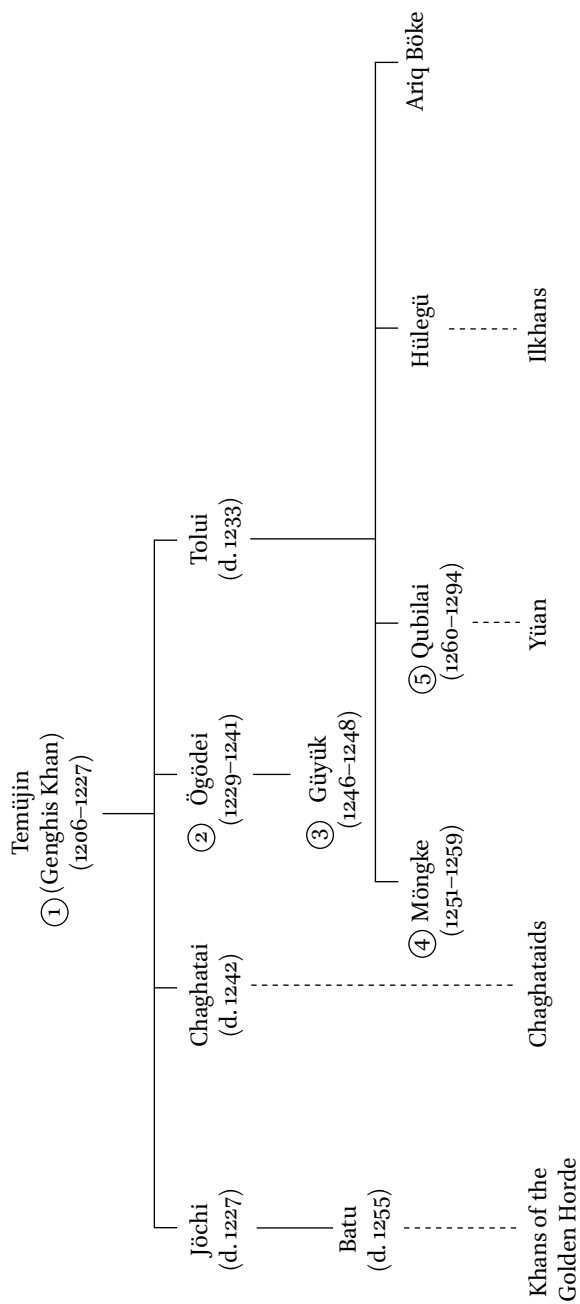
MAP 4 *The Fertile Crescent*



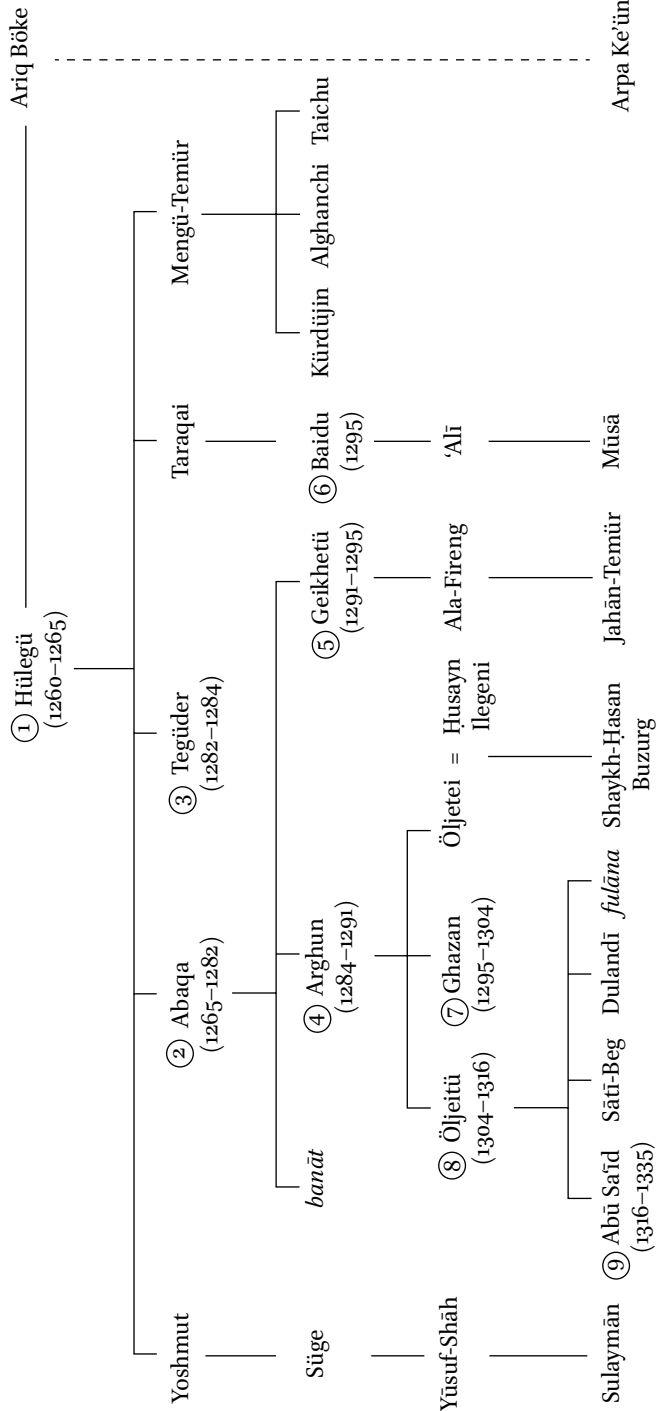
MAP 5 *Damascus*

# Genealogical Tables

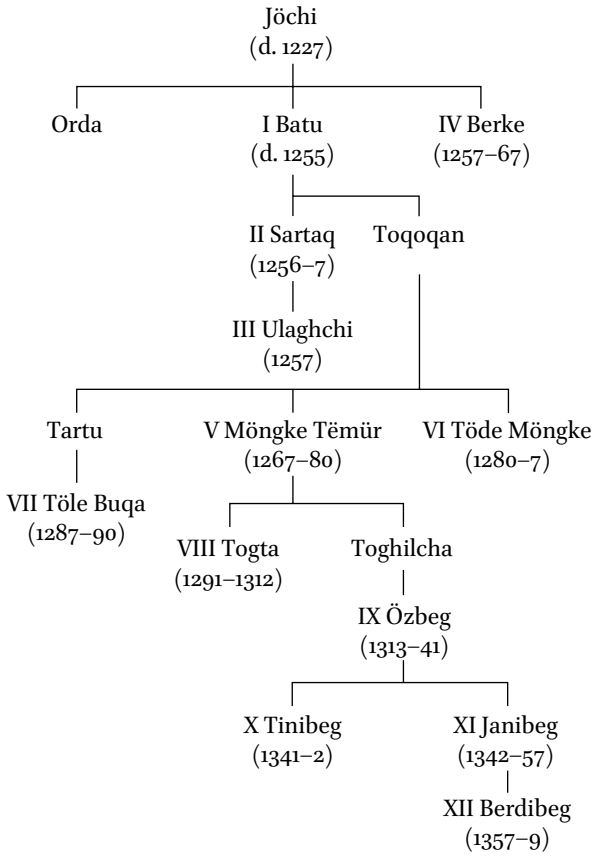
## GREAT KHANS



ILKHANIDS



KHANS OF THE GOLDEN HORDE





**Mamluks Sultans until 741/1340**

- 648/1250 Shajar al-Durr  
 648/1250 al-Mu‘izz al-Dīn Aybek  
 655/1257 al-Manşūr Nūr al-Dīn ‘Alī b. Aybek  
 657/1259 al-Muẓaffar Sayf al-Dīn Quṭuz  
 658/1260 al-Zāhir Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Bunduqḍārī  
 676/1277 al-Sa‘īd Nāşir al-Dīn Berke Khan b. Baybars  
 678/1279 al-‘Ādil Badr al-Dīn Sulāmish b. Baybars  
 678/1279 al-Manşūr Sayf al-Dīn Qalāwūn b. Alfī  
 689/1290 al-Ashraf Salāḥ al-Dīn Khalīl b. Qalāwūn  
 693/1293 al-Nāşir Nāşir al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Qalāwūn (first reign)  
 694/1294 al-‘Ādil Zayn al-Dīn Kitbugha  
 696/1296 al-Manşūr Ḥusām al-Dīn Lāchīn  
 698/1299 al-Nāşir Nāşir al-Dīn Muḥammad (second reign)  
 708/1309 al-Muẓaffar Rukn al-Dīn Baybars al-Jāshankīr  
 709/1310 al-Nāşir Nāşir al-Dīn Muḥammad (third reign)  
 741/1340 Various descendents of al-Nāşir al-Dīn Muḥammad (until 784/1382)

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# Illustrations

افتتاح مشهور		
قسم اول از طبقه اعلیٰ ملوک سلاطین		
ایالت ابتدایه محمد افغان سلطان درین عهد علمی وفارسی اوده شد چه اسم علم بجا نماند اینها نیز بنشیند از جمع الملکین		
العربی	الفارسیه	الدعوات الافغانیه
بازماند علی بن ابی طالب	ای قوی بادشاهی ابراهیمی	آفتاب خلیفای دولت قاهره و ماه جهان افروز سلطنت باهره
سیرت خیر و کرم و انوار العباد	درین عهد قوی بود از اولین	تخلال قریب سیصد سال و بیست و هفت روز از نون <b>ف</b> بر طرفی
بجای هر ملک باقی ماند	و جیب بر این مکتوب	اسباب غلبت و جهانداری و آثار ابدیت و بختیاری <b>ف</b> و روز بروز
درین عهد دولت افغان	ای روز باریزه تو نماند	سراوق دولت اقبال و بارگاه غلبت و احوال <b>ف</b> باو تا خود
و بنال الهدی و دو مصلحتی	صدراعظمین از نون	عینت غلبت فری و سه سیم اسامی <b>ف</b> بیامین اعلیٰ
ایستادن الملک و اهل بیاد	ای ملک ترا در عالم لوی	در کمالیت پناه و بارگاه غلبت استباه <b>ف</b> تمام منتهی
و باه نفس الایاد	ای خورشید عالم	آفتاب عالم ارای معدلت کامل و عاقله شام <b>ف</b>
دو سلسله حق الافغان	ای روز باریزه تو نماند	تو اعدت و کجای مکاری و مباحی ابدت نامداری <b>ف</b> چون نامی
تخلال در آن خلفه الله	ایستادن الملک و اهل بیاد	سیرت کاروانی و سنده جهانبانی بوز سلطنت جاودانی <b>ف</b>
باین مضمون بود که ایام	ایستادن الملک و اهل بیاد	دو هزار و صد و شصت و شش و افضان بوسه ن فرمان روانی رخسار
و بوج من عبادت	ایستادن الملک و اهل بیاد	معدلت <b>ف</b> تازه و نایم و حضرتت کنگر گمشد از طرد و حواشی

FIGURE 1 Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn, Makhsan al-inshā', BNF Persan 73, fol. 6v.

قسمت ششم از طبقه اعلیٰ اعظم وزراء و اعیان مملکت		
فارسیانه	دعوات افضلیه	الایات الایقنه
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>ظلال حسن ما طفت و حسن مرمت عالمیاب <b>ف</b> بر مفاخر قافیه برایا و عامه رعایا بوی بهت حضرت و اعیان العظامی خلد و او بود باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>در کما اصف بنیاه <b>ف</b> مصدر وجود اعظم نامدار و اکابر عالمی قدر باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>در مصالح دین بود دولت و دنیا چه مکتب ملت برای عالم اری و تبریر عقد کنای <b>ف</b> عوض و او کول و مرادات علیه و مرادات علیه شرف حصول بود حصول</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>در قایق انظار زاده و فواید انظار صابیه <b>ف</b> موجب نظام حکایت او را نام و مغفلات تمام اهل نام باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>ایام عادت فرجام و آفات میان آریات <b>ف</b> پیوسته شیخته و عیایون باک و ذات ملکی مملکات از شوایب حوادث فاجات خود و مصون باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>میان ذات صافی صفات اصفیجات <b>ف</b> الی یوم العسور کافل مصالح جمهور و مقصدی انتظام او را شراف و صدور باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>ساعت دولت ثواب و کده سعادت استسباب <b>ف</b> عوار مجل نزول مواهب جابه و لال و هبه اصناف العاف حضرتی از ظاهر باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>الطفا بیدات دانی و اعطاف توفیقات سجا با یامیست انجام <b>ف</b> که ناریه خازن فضایل و نایب معانی آراهم و اعلیست مستقل و معزونی باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>مغلا جبار عالی مناب <b>ف</b> علی تواتر الادوار و تعاقب الاعصار املاط طوائف اعم و مقصد اعظمی باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>
<p>ای که در این منصب از این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>	<p>مدیر کلیات امور و قوانین تمهیدات اصلاح احوال جمهور برای جهان ارای <b>ف</b> عوض و کمال باک</p>	<p>در ایامی که در این منصب خود حکایت کرده و گفته که این کار بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که بجای آنکه بخواهد بگوید که</p>

FIGURE 2 Kamāl al-Dīn Ḥusayn, Makhsan al-inshā', BNF Persan 73, fol. 7v.



FIGURE 3 Mu'izz al-ansāb, BNF Persan 67, fol. 13r.





FIGURE 5 *Rashid al-Din, Jami' al-tawarikh, BNF Suppl. persan 113, fol. 139v.*





بوده و در سطر اول آن رقم  
بخت سطر اول آن رقم  
سوی سطر اول آن رقم  
نوعاً مشرقی در  
سده

تاریخ هبوط	تاریخ طوفانی	تاریخ رومی	تاریخ بیشطی	تاریخ جری	تاریخ فرس قدیم	تاریخ جلاک
تاریخ هبوط	تاریخ طوفانی	تاریخ رومی	تاریخ بیشطی	تاریخ جری	تاریخ فرس قدیم	تاریخ جلاک
تاریخ طوفانی	تاریخ طوفانی	تاریخ رومی	تاریخ بیشطی	تاریخ جری	تاریخ فرس قدیم	تاریخ جلاک
تاریخ رومی	تاریخ بیشطی	تاریخ جری	تاریخ فرس قدیم	تاریخ جلاک		
تاریخ جری	تاریخ فرس قدیم	تاریخ جلاک				
تاریخ جلاک						

بدر تاریخ نوم باینی استعظم  
اوله که یکیشک استغسانه اوله  
عده ده نظراولنه در سبب سطر ده اوله  
تقدیم جلی الیه تقدم زمانه حکم اولنور اوله سطر  
بالا ده تاریخ جری خانی سبب اولوب شیخ خانی در نظر  
ابدک تاریخ رومی جدا سینه کلر خانی طقوز یوزا و تو زین  
عده کور و ک در رومی جری بدین سطر ده مقدم اولغیله تاریخ  
رومی جری تمدن طقوز یوزا و تو زین سینه مقدم در دیو حکم ابدک و غنی بیابان  
کتاب بو معتمد عام اولدی سرب بد الواح و قایع وضعه شروع اولنور

**لوحیة وقایع الوفیة الفداز تاریخ هجرت**

بوده و در سطر ده اوله  
وقایع بیابان چون تاریخ صحیفه و بر نچه جدول در در و توغیر تعیینکنک  
اکثر نه احتساب اولمشدر علی کل حال بقدر بدین خالی و کلدر

FIGURE 7 Taqwīm, BNF Suppl. turc n49, fol. 6v.



FIGURE 8 Gospel, Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, Ms 251, fol. 15v.



FIGURE 9 *The white standards, insignia of the power. Inaugural ceremony of the memorial dedicated to Genghis Khan (Photo by Isabelle Bianquis in 2006).*



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